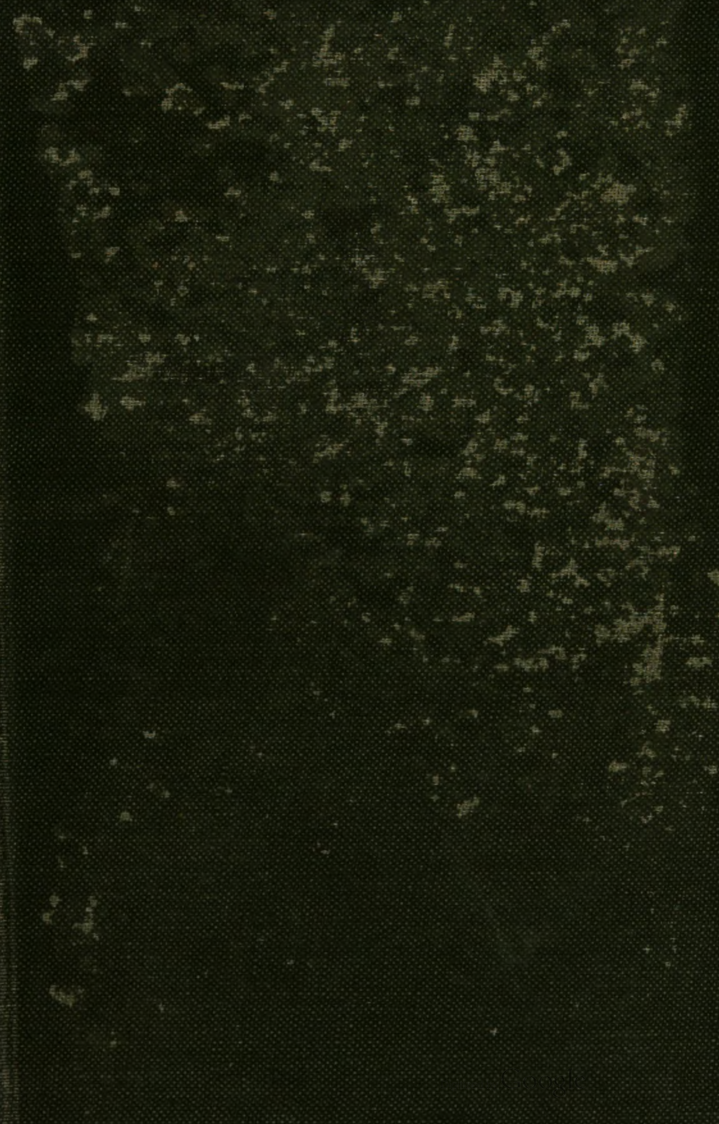


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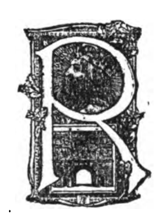
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DANTE, AND ST ANSELM

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BY

DEAN CHURCH



LONDON
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INTRODUCTION

Dean Church's essay on Dante was written in 1849, when the author was fresh from a recent tour in Italy and Greece, and first appeared, in January 1850, in the pages of *The Christian Remembrancer*, a short-lived quarterly review conducted with great ability and brilliancy, to which some eminent men connected with the famous Oxford Movement contributed. Its author was then not known beyond Oxford, where he was in the eventful times in the thirties and forties of the last century, when that University made such a deep and permanent effect on the religious and spiritual life of England, and where he came into intimate contact with men who have left their impress so indelibly on their times—Pusey, Keble, Hurrell-Froude, and especially with Newman, whose disciple he was, and whose subsequent secession to Rome he felt as deeply as a personal loss. The influence of Newman was great and lasting, and Church never ceased his regard for him till death took both of them away, within a few months of each other, in 1890. In his last book, published soon after his death, on the Oxford Movement, he has left a valuable record behind of his connection with these great men, and especially with Newman, of whom it contains a brilliant sketch, written in his best style.

The essay was reprinted, with some other of his early contributions to the press, by some of his Oxford friends in 1854, when he had left that University, where he was for fourteen years, from 1838 to 1852, Fellow of Oriel, when that College was at its best, being the centre of the Movement with which it is identified, to become the Rector of Whatley, a small parish in Somersetshire, where he was fully content to remain for nearly nineteen years in rural obscurity, till Gladstone dragged him out and forced upon

him the Deanery of St. Paul's in August 1871. But this was the only preferment he could be prevailed upon to accept. When Archbishop Tait died, in 1882, Gladstone was anxious to appoint him to the vacant See of Canterbury, and he had the refusal of it (*Life and Letters*, by his daughter, p. 307). But he preferred to remain where he was, nay, he even thought of retirement from that post also. This volume of 1854 was, curiously enough, called by the same name, *Essays and Reviews*, as the work which created so much commotion in the Church of England six years later, and earned an unenviable notoriety for a time. With the characteristic modesty and self-diffidence which clung to him throughout his career, the author wrote to a friend at the time that 'I should not have republished the essays myself'. But the Oxford friends judged better of his work, for by publishing the volume they not only showed their regard for the young author, but also made a permanent and valuable contribution to English literature.

The modest looking volume soon went out of print, and has always been prized by book-lovers. The author would not reprint it in his life time. A great part of it now makes its appearance again, after fifty-two years, in the present book. The essay on Dante, contained in it, was widely appreciated even on the Continent, and its excellence was acknowledged by the German scholar of Dante, Gœschel, in his article in Herzoy's famous *Real Encyclopadie* (Dean Plumptre, *Quarterly Review*, April 1869, p. 438). The Dean was prevailed upon to reprint it in 1878, when it appeared in the volume which contained the first English translation of Dante's *De Monarchia*, done by his talented son, who died prematurely in 1888.

The two essays on St Anselm, reprinted here for the first time from the volume of 1854, were afterwards expanded by the author into his monograph on that great mediæval character in 1870. But the

original essays possess a vigour and freshness of treatment which the later expansion somewhat lacks. When he was at work upon the later monograph the author himself felt this, and he thus wrote to his intimate friend of Oxford days, Canon Mozley: 'Doing Anselm a second time was rather tiresome work. The getting it up was almost as troublesome as the first time, without the zest of a new subject'. The same letter contains some noteworthy remarks about his hero. 'What you say is so true, not merely about the many sides of the character, so much beyond what was to be expected in his time and position, but about the kind of "elegance" that there is about him, with an unconsciousness of the idea of elegance at all. He almost answers to Matthew Arnold's requirements of "sweetness and light", in the free way in which he lets his thought return upon itself, and play about common subjects, and received words and formulas' (*Life and Letters*, p. 192).

These essays on Anselm first appeared in 1873 in *The British Critic*—a weekly paper of the type of the present *Guardian*, which Church helped to found a little later, in 1846, with friends like Mozley (1813—1878) and Rogers (afterwards Lord Blachford, 1811—1889)—and were the first attempts in literature of their author. He thus playfully writes of his subject to his mother while engaged on it in October 1842: 'I am hard at work on an article for *The British Critic* on the life of a certain Archbishop of Canterbury, named Anselm, who was a very great man in the eyes of people a long while ago, but he has been shelved a good while for having had the misfortune to be a monk and a papist. He lived in the days of a certain unspeakable scamp of a king called William Rufus, a sort of combination of Lords A, and B, and C, with a good spice of peculiar wickedness of his own to boot; and he and Anselm, as was natural, could not quite "hit it off together", or live on the best of terms. So accordingly, in my

presumption, my article intends, if it is admitted within the purple covers, to record to the nineteenth century the sort of cat-and-dog life of an Archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh' (*Life and Letters*, p. 39).

Anselm is one of the most attractive figures of mediæval history, and in English history he has special significance as beginning that strife of the Church with the State which lasted up to the Reformation and the days of Wolsey. Anselm triumphed in the conflict as signally as Wolsey was worsted; and it was well that it was so, as Anselm represented the power of the Church, which in those times stood up valiantly for right and justice against the brute force of the King. In these essays are laid bare before us with a masterly hand the causes, the course, and the issue of this conflict. Saint Anselm wielded the power of the moral law against the absolutism of the Red King and his brother Henry with irresistible authority. We are made to see clearly why the two English Kings were so jealous of the encroachments of the Papal power, as represented by Anselm, on their irresponsible authority. The Dean treats the subject with more than his usual grasp. He has evident sympathy for his hero, whom he may be said to resemble in some respects. Born in Italy, educated by Lanfranc, Anselm succeeded him as Archbishop in England. Church was educated abroad, in Italy, in his early years, and might have become, like Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury had he liked. He too may be said to have his Lanfranc in Newman, whose disciple he was in early life.

The essay on Dante was occasioned by the publication, in 1849, of a very scholarly and useful prose translation of the first part of *La Divina Commedia*, the *Inferno*, by John Arthur Carlyle (1801—1879), a younger brother of the famous Thomas Carlyle, who mentions him in his will as 'to be regarded as my second self, my surviving self'—though as a

matter of fact he did not survive him, dying two years before him, in 1879—and had named him his executor. But according to the practice which prevailed at the time amongst writers of essays or articles in critical reviews, and which Macaulay[1], a master of the craft, has humorously described in one of his early essays, young Church merely mentioned it at the head of his essay and said no more about it. Beyond suggesting his essay the book of Dr. Carlyle was of little use, and he owed nothing to him. But for this supposed neglect the Dean thus characteristically makes amends, in a note, when he republished the essay later, after nearly thirty years: 'I have never quite forgiven myself for not having said more of the unpretending but honest and most useful volume which stood at the head of this essay when it first appeared as an article. It was placed there, according to what was then a custom of article writers, as a peg to hang remarks upon which might or might not be criticisms of the particular book so noticed. It did not offer itself specially to my use, and my attention was busy with my own work. But that was no excuse for availing myself of a good book, and not giving it the notice which it deserved'. Dr. Carlyle just lived to read this handsome apology, as he died in 1879, a few months after it appeared. He did not follow up this *Inferno* volume with two others containing the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, as first intended, for want of appreciation of his labours. According to *The Dictionary of National Biography* he had translated considerable portions of the remaining

[1] 'Those who have attended to the practice of our literary tribunal are well aware that, by means of certain legal fictions similar to those of Westminster Hall, we are frequently enabled to take cognisance of cases lying beyond the sphere of our original jurisdiction. We need hardly say, therefore, that in the present instance, M. Perier is merely a Richard Roe, who will not be mentioned in any subsequent stage of the proceedings, and whose name is used for the sole purpose of bringing Machiavelli into court.'—*Essay on Machiavelli*, init.

parts of the *Commedia*, but they were never published. Nearly eighteen years later a second edition of his *Inferno* was called forth, in 1867, and since then, owing chiefly to Church's appreciation, it has been frequently reprinted and included in Bohn's Library. John Carlyle belonged to the medical profession, and for seven years, from 1831 to 1837, resided in Italy as physician to Lady Clare, who had separated from her husband, who was then in Bombay as its Governor—a post obtained through the influence of Francis Jeffrey, the great critic and early friend of his brother Thomas. He possessed considerable literary ability, and the estimate of Dante as man and poet prefixed to his volume, which contained also the Italian text, is well worth reading even now. The influence of his great brother is distinctly to be traced in it, and it follows closely the ideas in the famous lecture on 'the hero as poet'.[1]

The essay on Dante has long since been recognized as incomparably the best appreciation of the great Italian poet and his times in English. A great critic, in many respects akin to Church in his insight and delicacy of touch, Richard Holt Hutton, thinks that 'for the appreciation of Dante and the Dante period there was no English scholar to compare with him' (*Contemporary Thought and Thinkers*, vol. ii., p. 244). Another leading critic, who combines in himself the usually distinct qualities of the poet and the critic, Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, thus speaks of its place among other books on Dante in English: 'Although many essays have appeared since, there is still nothing in the English language which explains so accurately the literary and historical position of the great Florentine. In fact when we compare the Dean with other writers on the

[1] Mr. A. J. Butler may be said to have continued in our time John Carlyle's labours on Dante, and given in his scholarly prose translations of the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* similar helps to the student of the original as his prose *Inferno*.

subject; we appreciate more highly those qualities of reason and fine suggestiveness which distinguish all he says. His erudition is kept in the background and his information is not profuse; but he manages to reproduce the atmosphere and the ideas of Dante's time and set him amongst his actual surroundings in such a way as to indicate his significance as a Christian philosopher. After reading many books on Dante we still find in Dean Church's essay a depth and freshness all its own' (*Athenæum*, 1888, p. 559). But his influence in English Dante literature is best testified by the late Dean Plumptre (1821—1891), himself a great contributor to that literature and one of the best translators of the poet. 'Not in the sense', says he in his valuable *Study of Dante in England*, 'of its being the topic of the day or making a sensation, but as marking the beginning of a new era in the study of the *Commedia*, the article on Dante by Dean Church, in *The Christian Remembrancer* for January 1850, may well be described in a favourite phrase of our Teutonic neighbours as "epoch-making". It is thorough, complete, exhaustive. But its very completeness, and its length, forbid any attempt to analyse it, and the high thoughts and noble temper that permeate the whole make it difficult to select quotations. . . The reader will scarcely, I think, wonder that I should have dwelt so fully on his unsurpassed essay. On one, at least, of its readers it worked, as I have said in the dedication to the *Inferno*, with an "epoch-making" power. I never turn to it, even now, without the feeling that it anticipates well nigh all that has been said by others since, and says it better than most of them' (Dante, *Studies*, vol. ii., pp. 456–9). Higher praise than this it is not possible to give.

By temperament and training Church was best fitted to deal with Dante. He was eminently judicial, and possessed in a high degree the critical and historical faculties which are so conspicuous in every-

thing that he wrote, but above all in this essay, which stamps him, as Canon MacColl rightly said at the time of his death, as one of the first critics of any age (*Contemporary Review*, 1891, p. 146). That breadth of view and catholicity of taste which made him appreciate and judge impartially writers so various as Dante, Bacon, Montaigne, Pascal, was due in a great measure to his innate cosmopolitanism. Born at Lisbon in 1815, of an English father, who had settled in Portugal for business, and a German mother long resident in the latter country, he was removed to Florence in 1818, and passed in that city of Dante the ten most impressionable years of his life. The impressions thus gained in early life from residing in Italy were lasting, and had a permanent influence on his tastes and studies through life. This cosmopolitanism was not confined to him, but ran in the family, and was strongly illustrated on its active side in the career of his uncle, General Sir Richard Church, who made a name for himself in the service of the King of Naples in Italy, and later became still more famous as one of the heroes and leaders of the war of independence in Greece. That strong religious spirit which marked him and all his work, he may be said to have inherited from his Quaker ancestors. That strong feeling for art under all its aspects, which distinguished him through life, he owed to his early residence and education in that land *par excellence* of art, Italy. The fascination of that classic land under whose influence he thus came early, was renewed in after life by frequent and prolonged visits. It was soon after one of these visits to Italy, in 1847, when he was fresh from the scenes which Dante describes in his great poem, that he undertook to write this essay. Brought up in Florence, it was natural that a man of his susceptible temperament should give himself up, on revisiting it, to the historic and imaginative charms of the place, and should admire the poet who has above everything identified himself so

closely with that great city. A man of different temperament might, like Addison, pass through Florence and Ravenna, the cities of the birth and death of Dante, without ever thinking even of that great poet. (Cf. Dean Plumptre, *Contemporary Review*, vol. xl., p. 864.) But to him such a thing was impossible. Dante was his earliest study; the boy was daily reminded by his surroundings of him; the scenes described so vividly by the poet were the haunts of his boyhood and early life. When he revisited Italy, in 1847, Dante was his constant and unfailing companion, never out of his reach, as his daughter tells us in her delightful sketch of his life, during his journeys, and the long days of his *vetturino* travelling, as the brothers drove together from Lyons to Marseilles and along the Cornice Road to Genoa on their way to Florence. The little well-worn volume of *La Divina Commedia*, which had been laid on Dante's tomb at Ravenna, is filled with marginal notes and jottings, bearing witness to its constant use, and to the associations which had grown up during the journey round numberless passages of the poem, the last entry at the closing canto of the *Paradiso* bearing the date, 'Florence, Christmas Day, 1847' (*Life*, pp. 133–4). This essay, published two years later, was the ripe outcome of this diligent and enthusiastic study. The illustrative passages of the poem, which he throughout quotes so lavishly yet appropriately, do not, it will be now seen, smell of the lamp as it were, but are redolent of the balmy air of the sunny land which was almost a second *patria* to him. In this essay, as well as those on Anselm, he turns his intimate personal knowledge of Italy to the best account, and makes his readers as if it were at home there by the local colour which he imparts to his pictures. We need only give as instances the description of the Abbey of Bec, in the Anselm essays, and the long description of Florence as it was in Dante's early days, in the first part of the Dante essay. To the last he was

fond of visiting Italy, and indeed of travelling generally, and in 1873 he preached a characteristic sermon about 'Foreign Travel', depicting its advantages.[1]

[1] In a sermon preached in St James', Piccadilly, in 1873, on 'foreign travel', he eloquently enlarges from different points of view on its benefits. The following passage may be quoted here, as it will give some idea of the Dean's thoughtful and dignified style of preaching. 'Foreign travel is like the opening in us of a new literature, in its unknown ideas, its unimagined powers and aims. We become in a fresh measure alive to the narrowness of our past horizon, we find it widening and widening onwards, with new disclosures, with hitherto unconceived possibilities, with enlarged experience and quickened curiosity and altered points of view. A man turns a new page in his life, when he finds himself actually face to face with that he has heard of and imagined, and knows perhaps familiarly in books, but now for the first time beholds in its completeness, with its real surroundings, its real atmosphere, as one connected whole. It may be things; it may be men; but he understands that he has that which, whether for knowledge or for delight, nothing but presence could have given him. He has gained a new possession; he has gained that which enables him to put in new and authentic touches in his picture of the world; to strengthen, to correct, to amplify his thought of its realities. He has gained new bonds of interest, it may be of sympathy, with his kind, with this earth, his dwelling-place; he has formed new relations with human minds and characters; he has formed new ties with new places, and has come perhaps to feel for them an affection akin to that of home. He has gained that which he could gain no other way, of a first-hand knowledge of the magnificence, the scale, the lavish variety, the charm, the strangeness of nature; of the manifold ways in which men who are alive with us now live their life, and direct their course, and fashion their social order and the portion of the world allotted to them, and use their gifts and mark their passage through time. To have seen with our eyes the rivers of Egypt and the remains of its mysterious civilization; to have seen with our eyes the hills of Galilee, and the golden-hued columns of the broken Parthenon, and the splendour in decay of imperial cities, the Old and the New Rome; to have become acquainted with what makes up the daily life of a strange community, its peculiar customs, its common sights, the faces of its people, the forms of nature, the inventions of art, the governing passions, the fixed pursuits, the characteristic ideas, social, political, religious, which sway the minds of millions; or

About the plan, purpose, and scope of *La Divina Commedia* many conflicting views and theories have been advanced by various critics. The Dean's view is eminently sane and rational, and does full justice to Dante's comprehensive mind. In an eloquent passage, showing fullness of knowledge and keenness of insight, he thus sets forth Dante's fitness for the task of constructing an all-embracing poetic edifice in the *Commedia*. 'As a man of society, his memory is full of the images, formalities, graces, follies, fashions—of expressive motions, postures, gestures, looks—of music, of handicrafts, of the conversation of friends and associates—of all that passes, so transient, yet so keenly pleasant or distasteful between man and man. As a traveller, he recalls continually the names and scenes of the world; as a man of speculation, the secrets of nature—the phenomena of light, the theory of the planets' motions, the idea and laws of physiology. As a man of learning, he is filled with the thoughts and recollections of ancient fable and history; as a politician, with the thoughts, prognostications, and hopes of the history of the day; as a moral philosopher he has watched himself, his external sensations and changes, his inward passions, his mental powers, his ideas, his conscience; he has far and wide noted character, discriminated motives, classed good and evil deeds. All that the man of society, of

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again, to have known what nature can be, in her greatness and strength, in her stability and vast calm, in her terrors which never visit us here, in her luxuriance and glory which here she austerely withholds from us, her floods and endless plains and her mountain peaks, her Atlantic waves, her tropical storms, her perpetual ice-fields—to have had our eyes rest on all these things in their own homes, as part, natural and harmonious, of that stage to which we for the moment were transferred from our familiar places—this is to have passed into a new level of life, to have the veil so far removed which hangs between our limited sight and feeble imagination, and the vast and wonderful facts of the existing world.'—*Paschal and other Sermons*, pp. 284–7.

travel, of science, of learning, the politician, the moralist, could gather, is used at will in the great poetic structure; but all converges to the purpose, and is directed by the intense feeling of the theologian, who sees this wonderful and familiar scene melting into, and ending in another yet more wonderful, but which will one day be as familiar—who sees the difficult but sure progress of the manifold remedies of the Divine government to their predestined issue; and, over all, God and His saints.'

Above all, he cannot away with the ignoble view which would make of this grand poem a mere party and political pamphlet on which the poet exhausted his powers. In condemning this view, of which, strangely enough, the Italians are champions, the Dean is justly severe. 'It has been maintained that the hundred cantos of that Vision of the Universe are but a manifesto of the Ghibelline propaganda, designed, under the veil of historic images and scenes, to insinuate what it was dangerous to announce; and Beatrice, in all her glory and sweetness, is but a specimen of the jargon, cant, and slang of Ghibelline freemasonry. When Italians write thus they degrade the greatest name of their country to a depth of laborious imbecility, to which the trifling of schoolmen and academicians is as nothing. It is to solve the enigma of Dante's works, by imagining for him a character in which it is hard to say which predominates, the pedant, mountebank, or infidel. The fanaticism of an outraged liberalism, produced by centuries of injustice and despotism, is but a poor excuse for such perverse blindness' (p. 87, Eversley ed.). In this connection Church refers to Arthur Henry Hallam's first essay, in which he, too, refutes this theory advanced by that distinguished Italian Dante scholar, Professor Gabriele Rossetti (1783—1854), the father of poetical children (*Remains*, pp. 23 -265).

R. P. KARKARIA.

DANTE

DANTE

The *Divina Commedia* is one of the landmarks of history. More than a magnificent poem, more than the beginning of a language and the opening of a national literature, more than the inspirer of art and the glory of a great people, it is one of those rare and solemn monuments of the mind's power which measure and test what it can reach to, which rise up ineffaceably and for ever as time goes on, marking out its advance by grander divisions than its centuries, and adopted as epochs by the consent of all who come after. It stands with the *Iliad* and Shakspere's plays, with the writings of Aristotle and Plato, with the *Novum Organon* and the *Principia*, with Justinian's *Code*, with the Parthenon and S. Peter's. It is the first Christian poem; and it opens European literature, as the *Iliad* did that of Greece and Rome. And, like the *Iliad*, it has never become out of date; it accompanies in undiminished freshness the literature which it began.

We approach the history of such works, in which genius seems to have pushed its achievements to a new limit, with a kind of awe. The beginnings of all things, their bursting out from nothing, and gradual evolution into substance and shape, cast on the mind a solemn influence. They come too near the fount of being to be followed up without our feeling sensible of the shadows which surround it. We cannot but fear, cannot but feel ourselves cut off from, this visible and familiar world—as we enter into the cloud. And, as with the processes of nature, so is it with those offsprings of man's mind, by which he has added permanently one more great feature to the world, and created a new power which is to act on mankind to the end. The mystery of the inventive and creative faculty, the subtle and

incalculable combinations by which it was led to its work and carried through it, are out of the reach of investigating thought. Often the idea recurs of the precariousness of the result: by how little the world might have lost one of its ornaments—by one sharp pang, or one chance meeting, or any other among the countless accidents among which man runs his course. And then the solemn recollection supervenes, that powers were formed, and life preserved, and circumstances arranged, and actions controlled, that thus it should be: and the work which man has brooded over, and at last created, is the foster-child too of that 'Wisdom which reaches from end to end, strongly and sweetly disposing all things'.

It does not abate these feelings that we can follow in some cases and to a certain extent the progress of a work. Indeed, the sight of the particular accidents among which it was developed—which belong, perhaps, to a heterogeneous and widely discordant order of things, which are out of proportion, and out of harmony with it, which do not explain it, which have, as it seems to us, no natural right to be connected with it, to bear on its character, or contribute to its accomplishment; to which we feel, as it were, ashamed to owe what we can least spare, yet on which its forming mind and purpose were dependent, and with which they had to conspire—affects the imagination even more than cases where we see nothing. We are tempted less to musing and wonder by the *Iliad*, a work without a history, cut off from its past, the sole relic and vestige of its age, unexplained in its origin and perfection, than by the *Divina Commedia*, destined for the highest ends and most universal sympathy, yet the reflection of a personal history and issuing seemingly from its chance incidents.

The *Divina Commedia* is singular among the great works with which it ranks for its strong stamp of personal character and history. We associate in general little more than the name—not the life—of

a great poet with his works; personal interest belongs more usually to greatness in its active than in its creative forms. But the whole idea and purpose of the *Commedia*, as well as its filling up and colouring, is determined by Dante's peculiar history. The loftiest, perhaps, in its aim and flight of all poems, it is also the most individual; the writer's own life is chronicled in it, as well as the issues and upshot of all things: it is at once the mirror to all time of the sins and perfections of men, of the judgments and grace of God, and the record, often the only one, of the transient names and local factions and obscure ambitions and forgotten crimes of the poet's own day; and in that awful company to which he leads us, in the most unearthly of his scenes, we never lose sight of himself. And, when this peculiarity sends us to history, it seems as if the poem which was to hold such a place in Christian literature hung upon and grew out of chance events rather than the deliberate design of its author. History indeed here, as generally, is but a feeble exponent of the course of growth in a great mind and great ideas: it shows us early a bent and purpose—the man conscious of power and intending to use it; and then the accidents among which he worked; but how that current of purpose threaded its way among them, how it was thrown back, deflected, deepened, by them, we cannot learn from history. It presents but a broken and mysterious picture. A boy of quick and enthusiastic temper grows up into youth in a dream of love. The lady of his mystic passion dies early. He dreams of her still, not as a wonder of earth, but as a Saint in Paradise, and relieves his heart in an autobiography, a strange and perplexing work of fiction, quaint and subtle enough for a metaphysical conceit, but on the other hand with far too much of genuine and deep feeling. It is a first essay; he closes it abruptly, as if dissatisfied with his work, but with the resolution of raising at a future day a worthy monument to the memory of

her whom he has lost. It is the promise and purpose of a great work. But a prosaic change seems to come over this half-ideal character. The lover becomes the student, the student of the 13th century—struggling painfully against difficulties, eager and hot after knowledge, wasting eye-sight and stinting sleep, subtle, inquisitive, active-minded and sanguine, but omnivorous, overflowing with dialectical forms, loose in premiss and ostentatiously rigid in syllogism, fettered by the refinements of half-awakened taste, and the mannerisms of the Provençals. Boethius and Cicero and the mass of mixed learning within his reach are accepted as the consolation of his human griefs: he is filled with the passion of universal knowledge, and the desire to communicate it. Philosophy has become the lady of his soul—to write allegorical poems in her honour, and to comment on them with all the apparatus of his learning in prose, his mode of celebrating her. Further, he marries; it is said, not happily. The antiquaries, too, have disturbed romance by discovering that Beatrice also was married some years before her death. He appears, as time goes on, as a burgher of Florence, the father of a family, a politician, an envoy, a magistrate, a partisan, taking his full share in the quarrels of the day. At length we see him, at once an exile and the poet of the *Commedia.* Beatrice reappears, shadowy, melting at times into symbol and figure, but far too living and real, addressed with too intense and natural feeling, to be the mere personification of anything. The lady of the philosophical *Canzoni* has vanished. The student's dream has been broken, as the boy's had been; and the earnestness of the man, enlightened by sorrow, overleaping the student's formalities and abstractions, reverted in sympathy to the earnestness of the boy, and brooded once more on that Saint in Paradise, whose presence and memory had once been so soothing, and who now seemed a real link between him and that stable country, 'where the angels are

in peace '. Round her image, the reflection of purity and truth, and forbearing love, was grouped that confused scene of trouble and effort, of failure and success which the poet saw round him; round her image it arranged itself in awful order—and that image, not a metaphysical abstraction but the living memory, freshened by sorrow, and seen through the softening and hallowing vista of years, of Beatrice Portinari—no figment of imagination, but God's creature and servant. A childish love, dissipated by study and business, and revived in memory by heavy sorrow—a boyish resolution made in a moment of feeling—interrupted, though it would be hazardous to say in Dante's case laid aside, for apparently more manly studies, gave the idea and suggested the form of the ' Sacred poem of earth and heaven '.

And the occasion of this startling unfolding of the poetic gift, of this passage of a soft and dreamy boy, into the keenest, boldest, sternest of poets, the free and mighty leader of European song, was—what is not ordinarily held to be a source of poetical inspiration—the political life. The boy had sensibility, high aspirations, and a versatile and passionate nature; the student added to this energy, various learning, gifts of language, and noble ideas on the capacities and ends of man. But it was the factions of Florence which made Dante a great poet. But for them he might have been a modern critic and essayist, born before his time, and have held a high place among the writers of fugitive verses; in Italy, a graceful but trifling and idle tribe, often casting a deep and beautiful thought into a mould of expressive diction, but oftener toying with a foolish and glittering conceit, and whose languid genius was exhausted by a sonnet. He might have thrown into the shade the Guidos and Cinos of his day, to be eclipsed by Petrarch. But he learned in the bitter feuds of Italy not to trifle; they opened to his view, and he had an eye to see, the true springs and abysses of this mortal life—motives and

passions stronger than lovers' sentiments, evils beyond the consolations of Boethius and Cicero; and from that fiery trial which without searing his heart annealed his strength and purpose he drew that great gift and power by which he stands pre-eminent even among his high compeers, the gift of being real. And the idea of the Commedia took shape, and expanded into its endless forms of terror and beauty, not under the roof-tree of the literary citizen, but when the exile had been driven out to the highways of the world, to study nature on the sea or by the river or on the mountain track, and men in the courts of Verona and Ravenna and in the schools of Bologna and Paris—perhaps of Oxford.

The connexion of these feuds with Dante's poem has given to the middle-age history of Italy an interest of which it is not undeserving in itself, as full of curious exhibitions of character and contrivance, but to which politically it cannot lay claim, amidst the social phenomena, so far grander in scale and purpose and more felicitous in issue, of the other western nations. It is remarkable for keeping up an antique phase; which, in spite of modern arrangements, it has not yet lost.* It is a history of cities. In ancient history all that is most memorable and instructive gathers round cities; civilization and empire were concentrated within walls; and it baffled the ancient mind to conceive how power should be possessed and wielded by numbers larger than might be collected in a single market-place. The Roman Empire indeed aimed at being one in its administration and law; but it was not a nation, nor were its provinces nations. Yet everywhere but in Italy it prepared them for becoming nations. And while everywhere else parts were uniting, and union was becoming organization—and neither geographical remoteness nor unwieldiness of numbers nor local interests and differences were untractable obstacles to that spirit of fusion which was at once the ambition of the few and the instinct of the many; and

cities, even where most powerful, had become the centres of the attracting and joining forces, knots in the political network—while this was going on more or less happily throughout the rest of Europe, in Italy the ancient classic idea lingered, in its simplicity, its narrowness, and jealousy, wherever there was any political activity. The history of Southern Italy, indeed, is mainly a foreign one; the history of modern Rome merges in that of the Papacy; but Northern Italy has a history of its own, and that is a history of separate and independent cities—points of mutual and indestructible repulsion, and, within, theatres of action where the blind tendencies and traditions of classes and parties weighed little on the freedom of individual character, and citizens could watch and measure and study one another with the minuteness of private life.

Two cities were the centres of ancient history, in its most interesting time. And two cities of modern Italy represent, with entirely undesigned but curiously exact coincidence, the parts of Athens and Rome. Venice, superficially so unlike, is yet in many of its accidental features, and still more in its spirit, the counterpart of Rome, in its obscure and mixed origin, in its steady growth, in its quick sense of order and early settlement of its polity, in its grand and serious public spirit, in its subordination of the individual to the family and the family to the state, in its combination of remote dominion with the liberty of a solitary and sovereign city. And though the associations and the scale of the two were so different, though Rome had its hills and its legions, and Venice its lagunes and galleys, the long empire of Venice, the heir of Carthage and predecessor of England on the seas, the great aristocratic republic of 1000 years, is the only empire that has yet matched Rome in length and steadiness of tenure. Brennus and Hannibal were not resisted with greater constancy than Doria and Louis XII; and that great aristocracy, long so proud, so high

spirited, so intelligent, so practical, who combined the enterprise and wealth of merchants, the self-devotion of soldiers and gravity of senators, with the uniformity and obedience of a religious order may compare without shame its Giustiniani, and Zenos, and Morosini, with Roman Fabii and Claudii. And Rome could not be more contrasted with Athens than Venice with Italian and contemporary Florence—stability with fitfulness, independence impregnable and secure with a short-lived and troubled liberty, empire meditated and achieved with a course of barren intrigues and quarrels. Florence, gay, capricious, turbulent, the city of party, the head and busy patroness of democracy in the cities round her—Florence, where popular government was inaugurated with its utmost exclusiveness and most pompous ceremonial, waging her little summer wars against Ghibelline tyrants, revolted democracies, and her own exiles; and further, so rich in intellectual gifts, in variety of individual character, in poets, artists, wits, historians—Florence in its brilliant days recalled the image of ancient Athens, and did not depart from its prototype in the beauty of its natural site, in its noble public buildings, in the size and nature of its territory. And the course of its history is similar, and the result of similar causes—a traditional spirit of freedom, with its accesses of fitful energy, its periods of grand display and moments of glorious achievement, but producing nothing politically great or durable, and sinking at length into a resigned servitude. It had its Pisistratidæ more successful than those of Athens; it had, too, its Harmodius and Aristogeiton; it had its great orator of liberty, as potent and as unfortunate as the antagonist of Philip. And finally, like Athens, it became content with the remembrance of its former glory, with being the fashionable and acknowledged seat of refinement and taste, with being a favoured dependency on the modern heir of the Cæsars. But if to Venice belongs a grander public

history, Florentine names and works, like Athenian, will be living among men when the Brenta shall have been left unchecked to turn the Lagunes into ploughland, and when Rome herself may no longer be the seat of the Popes.

The year of Dante's birth was a memorable one in the annals of Florence, of Italy, and of Christendom. The year 1265 was the year of that great victory of Benevento, where Charles of Anjou overthrew Manfred of Naples, and destroyed at one blow the power of the house of Swabia. From that time till the time of Charles V the emperors had no footing in Italy. Further, that victory set up the French influence in Italy, which, transient in itself, produced such strange and momentous consequences, by the intimate connexion to which it led between the French kings and the Popes. The protection of France was dearly bought by the captivity of Avignon, the great western schism, and the consequent secularization of the Papacy, which lasted on uninterrupted till the Council of Trent. Nearly three centuries of degradation and scandal, unrelieved by one heroic effort among the successors of Gregory VII, connected the Reformation with the triumph of Charles and the Pope at Benevento. Finally, by it the Guelf party was restored for good in Florence; the Guelf democracy, which had been trampled down by the Uberti and Manfred's chivalry at Monteaperti, once more raised its head, and fortune, which had long wavered between the rival lilies, finally turned against the white one, till the name of Ghibelline became a proscribed one in Florence, as Jacobite was once in Scotland, or Papist in England, or Royalist in France.

The names of Guelf and Ghibelline were the inheritance of a contest which, in its original meaning, had been long over. The old struggle between the priesthood and the empire was still kept up traditionally, but its ideas and interests were changed: they were still great and important ones, but not

those of Gregory VII. It had passed over from the mixed region of the spiritual and temporal into the purely political. The cause of the popes was that of the independence of Italy—the freedom and alliance of the great cities of the north and the dependence of the centre and south on the Roman See. To keep the Emperor out of Italy, to create a barrier of powerful cities against him south of the Alps, to form behind themselves a compact territory, rich, removed from the first burst of invasion, and maintaining a strong body of interested feudatories, had now become the great object of the popes. It may have been a wise policy on their part, for the maintenance of their spiritual influence, to attempt to connect their own independence with the political freedom of the Italian communities; but certain it is that the ideas and the characters which gave a religious interest and grandeur to the earlier part of the contest appear but sparingly, if at all, in its later forms.

The two parties did not care to keep in view principles which their chiefs had lost sight of. The Emperor and the Pope were both real powers, able to protect and assist; and they divided between them those who required protection and assistance. Geographical position, the rivalry of neighbourhood, family tradition, private feuds, and, above all, private interest, were the main causes which assigned cities, families, and individuals, to the Ghibelline or Guelf party. One party called themselves the Emperor's liegemen, and their watchword was authority and law; the other side were the liegemen of Holy Church, and their cry was liberty; and the distinction as a broad one is true. But a democracy would become Ghibelline without scruple, if its neighbour town was Guelf; and among the Guelf liegemen of the Church and liberty the pride of blood and love of power were not a whit inferior to that of their opponents. Yet, though the original principle of the contest was lost and the political distinctions of

parties were often interfered with by interest or accident, it is not impossible to trace in the two factions differences of temper, of moral and political inclinations, which, though visible only on a large scale and in the mass, were quite sufficient to give meaning and reality to their mutual opposition. These differences had come down, greatly altered of course, from the quarrel in which the parties took their rise. The Ghibellines, as a body, reflected the worldliness, the licence, the irreligion, the reckless selfishness, the daring insolence, and at the same time the gaiety and pomp, the princely magnificence and generosity and largeness of mind, of the house of Swabia; they were the men of the court and camp, imperious and haughty from ancient lineage or the Imperial cause, yet not wanting in the frankness and courtesy of nobility; careless of public opinion and public rights, but not dead to the grandeur of public objects and public services. Among them were found, or to them inclined, all who, whether from a base or a lofty ambition, desired to place their will above law[1]—the lord of the feudal castle, the robber-knight of the Apennine pass, the magnificent but terrible tyrants of the cities, the pride and shame of Italy, the Visconti and Scaligers. That renowned Ghibelline chief, whom the poet finds in the fiery sepulchres of the unbelievers with the great Ghibelline emperor and the princely Ghibelline cardinal—the disdainful and bitter, but lofty, spirit of Farinata degli Uberti, the conqueror, and then singly and at his own risk the saviour of his country which had wronged him, represents the good as well as the bad side of his party.

[1] 'Maghinardo da Susinana (*il Demonio*, Purg. 14) fu uno grande e savio tiranno . . . gran castellano, e con molti fedeli: savio fu di guerra e bene avventuroso in piu battaglie, e al suo tempo fece gran cose. Ghibellino era di sua nazione e in sue opere; ma co' Fiorentini era Guelfo e nimico di tutti i loro nimici, o Guelfi o Ghibellini che fossono.'—G. Vill. vii, 149. A Ghibelline by birth and disposition; yet, from circumstances, a close ally of the Guelfs of Florence.

The Guelfs, on the other hand, were the party of the middle classes; they rose out of, and held to, the people; they were strong by their compactness, their organization in cities, their commercial relations and interests, their command of money. Further, they were professedly the party of strictness and religion—a profession which fettered them as little as their opponents were fettered by the respect they claimed for imperial law. But, though by personal unscrupulousness and selfishness and in instances of public vengeance they sinned as deeply as the Ghibellines, they stood far more committed as a party to a public meaning and purpose—to improvement in law and the condition of the poor, to a protest against the insolence of the strong, to the encouragement of industry. The genuine Guelf spirit was austere, frugal, independent, earnest, religious, fond of its home and Church and of those celebrations which bound together Church and home; but, withal, very proud, very intolerant—in its higher form, intolerant of evil, but intolerant always, to whatever displeased it. Yet there was a grave and noble manliness about it which long kept it alive in Florence. It had not as yet turned itself against the practical corruptions of the Church, which was its ally; but this also it was to do when the popes had forsaken the cause of liberty, and leagued themselves with the brilliant tyranny of the Medici. Then Savonarola invoked, and not in vain, the stern old Guelf spirit of resistance, of domestic purity and severity, and of domestic religion, against unbelief and licentiousness even in the Church; and the Guelf '*Piagnoni*' presented, in a more simple and generous shape, a resemblance to our own Puritans, as the Ghibellines often recall the coarser and worse features of our own Cavaliers.

In Florence these distinctions had become mere nominal ones, confined to the great families who carried on their private feuds under the old party names, when Frederick II once more gave them

meaning. 'Although the accursed Guelf and Ghibelline factions lasted among the nobles of Florence, and they often waged war among themselves out of private grudges, and took sides for the said factions, and held one with another, and those who called themselves Guelfs desired the establishment of the Pope and Holy Church, and those who called themselves Ghibellines favoured the Emperor and his adherents, yet withal the people and commonalty of Florence maintained itself in unity, to the well-being and honour and establishment of the commonwealth.'[1] But the appearance on the scene of an emperor of such talent and bold designs revived the languid contest, and gave to party a cause, and to individual passions and ambition an impulse and pretext. The division between Guelf and Ghibelline again became serious, involved all Florence, armed house against house and neighbourhood against neighbourhood, issued in merciless and vindictive warfare, grew on into a hopeless and deadly breach, and finally lost to Florence, without remedy or repair, half her noble houses and the love of the greatest of her sons. The old badge of their common country became to the two factions the sign of their implacable hatred; the white lily of Florence, borne by the Ghibellines, was turned to red by the Guelfs, and the flower of two colours marked a civil strife as cruel and as fatal, if on a smaller scale, as that of the English roses[2].

It was waged with the peculiar characteristics of Italian civil war. There the city itself was the scene of battle. A 13th-century city in Italy bore on its face the evidence that it was built and arranged for such emergencies. Its crowded and narrow streets were a collection of rival castles whose tall towers, rising thick and close over its roofs, or hanging perilously over its close courts, attested the emulous pride and the insecurity of Italian civic life. There, within a separate pre-

[1] G. Villani, vi, 33. [2] G. Villani, vi, 33, 43; *Parad.* 19.

cinct, flanked and faced by jealous friends or deadly enemies, were clustered together the dwellings of the various members of each great house—their common home and the monument of their magnificence and pride, and capable of being, as was so often necessary, their common refuge. In these fortresses of the leading families, scattered about the city, were the various points of onset and recovery in civic battle: in the streets barricades were raised, mangonels and crossbows were plied from the towers, a series of separate combats raged through the city, till chance at length connected the attacks of one side, or some panic paralysed the resistance of the other, or a conflagration interposed itself between the combatants, burning out at once Guelf and Ghibelline and laying half Florence in ashes. Each party had their turn of victory; each, when vanquished, went into exile, and carried on the war outside the walls; each had their opportunity of remodelling the orders and framework of government, and each did so relentlessly at the cost of their opponents. They excluded classes, they proscribed families, they confiscated property, they sacked and burned warehouses, they levelled the palaces, and outraged the pride of their antagonists. To destroy was not enough, without adding to it the keenest and newest refinement of insult. Two buildings in Florence were peculiarly dear—among their '*cari luoghi*'—to the popular feeling and the Guelf party; the Baptistery of S. John, 'il mio bel S. Giovanni', 'to which all the good people resorted on Sundays'[1], where they had all received baptism, where they had been married, where families were solemnly reconciled; and a tall and beautiful tower close by it, called the 'Torre del Guardamorto', where the bodies of the 'good people', who of old were all buried at S. Giovanni, rested on their way to the grave. The victorious Ghibellines, when they levelled

[1] G. Villani, vi, 33; iv, 10; *Inf.* 19; *Parad.* 25.

the Guelf towers, overthrew this one, and endeavoured to make it crush in its fall the sacred church, 'which', says the old chronicler, 'was prevented by a miracle'. The Guelfs, when their day came, built the walls of Florence with the stones of Ghibelline palaces[1]. One great family stands out pre-eminent in this fierce conflict as the victim and monument of party war. The head of the Ghibellines was the proud and powerful house of the Uberti, who shared with another great Ghibelline family, the Pazzi, the valley of the upper Arno. They lighted up the war in the Emperor's cause. They supported its weight and guided it. In time of peace they were foremost and unrestrained in defiance of law and scorn of the people—in war, the people's fiercest and most active enemies. Heavy sufferers in their property and by the sword and axe, yet untamed and incorrigible, they led the van in that battle so long remembered to their cost by the Guelfs, the battle of Monteaperti:

> Lo strazio, e 'l gran scempio
> Che fece l' Arbia colorata in rossa. (*Inf.*, 10)

That the head of their house, Farinata, saved Florence from the vengeance of his meaner associates was not enough to atone for the unpardonable wrongs which they had done to the Guelfs and the democracy. When the red lily of the Guelfs finally supplanted the white one as the arms of Florence and badge of Guelph triumph, they were proscribed for ever, like the Pisistratidæ and the Tarquins. In every amnesty their names were excepted. The site on which their houses had stood was never again to be built upon and remains the Great Square of Florence; the architect of the Palace of the People was obliged to sacrifice its symmetry, and place it awry, that its walls might not encroach on the accursed ground[2]. 'They had been', says

[1] G. Villani, vi, 39, 65.

[2] G. Villani, vi, 33; viii, 26; Vasari, arnolfo di Lapo, i, 255. (Fir. 1846)



a writer, cotemporary with Dante, speaking of the time when he also became an exile, 'they had been for more than forty years outlaws from their country, nor ever found mercy nor pity, remaining always abroad in great state, nor ever abased their honour, seeing that they ever abode with kings and lords, and to great things applied themselves.'[1] They were loved as they were hated. When under the protection of a cardinal one of them visited the city, and the chequered blue and gold blazon of their house was, after an interval of half a century, again seen in the streets of Florence, 'many ancient Ghibelline men and women pressed to kiss the arms'[2], and even the common people did him honour.

But the fortunes of Florentine factions depended on other causes than merely the address or vigour of their leaders. From the year of Dante's birth and Charles's victory Florence, as far as we shall have to do with it, became irrevocably Guelf. Not that the whole commonalty of Florence formally called itself Guelf, or that the Guelf party was co-extensive with it; but the city was controlled by Guelf councils, devoted to the objects of the great Guelf party, and received in return the support of that party in curbing the pride of the nobles and maintaining democratic forms. The Guelf party of Florence, though it was the life and soul of the republic and irresistible in its disposal of the influence and arms of Florence, and though it embraced a large number of the most powerful families, is always spoken of as something distinct from, and external to, the governing powers and the whole body of the people. It was a body with a separate and self-constituted existence—in the state, and allied to it, but an independent element, holding on to a large and comprehensive union without the state. Its organization in Florence is one of the most curious among the many curious

[1] Dino Compagni, p. 88. [2] *Ib.*, p. 107.

combinations which meet us in Italian history. After the final expulsion of the Ghibellines, the Guelf party took form as an institution, with definite powers and a local existence. It appears with as distinct a shape as the Jacobin Club or the Orange Lodges, side by side with the government. It was a corporate body with a common seal, common property, not only in funds but lands—officers, archives, a common palace[1], a great council, a secret committee, and last of all a public accuser of the Ghibellines; of the confiscated Ghibelline estates one-third went to the republic, another third to compensate individual Guelfs, the rest was assigned to the Guelf party[2]. A pope had granted them his own arms[3]; and their device, a red eagle clutching a serpent, may be yet seen, with the red lily and the party-coloured banner of the commonalty, on the battlements of the Palazzo Vecchio.

But the expulsion of the Ghibellines did but little to restore peace. The great Guelf families, as old as many of the Ghibellines, had as little reverence as they for law or civic rights. Below these, the acknowledged nobility of Florence, were the leading families of the 'people', houses created by successful industry or commerce, and pushing up into that privileged order which, however ignored and even discredited by the laws, was fully recognized by feeling and opinion in the most democratic times of the republic. Rivalries and feuds, street broils and conspiracies, high-handed insolence from the great men, rough vengeance from the populace, still continued to vex jealous and changeful Florence. The popes sought in vain to keep in order their quarrelsome liegemen, to reconcile Guelf with Guelf, and even Guelf with Ghibelline. Embassies went and came, to ask for mediation and to proffer it, to apply the healing paternal hand, to present an

[1] Giotto painted in it: Vasari, *Vit. di Giotto*, p. 314.
[2] G. Villani, vii, 2, 17.
[3] G. Villani, vii, 2.

obsequious and ostentatious submission. Cardinal legates came in state, and were received with reverential pomp; they formed private committees and held assemblies and made marriages; they harangued in honeyed words, and gained the largest promises; on one occasion the Great Square was turned into a vast theatre, and on this stage 150 dissidents on each side came forward, and in the presence and with the benediction of the cardinal kissed each other on the mouth[1]. And, if persuasion failed, the pope's representative hesitated not to excommunicate and interdict the faithful but obdurate city. But, whether excommunicated or blessed, Florence could not be at peace; however wise and subtle had been the peace-maker's arrangements, his departing *cortège* was hardly out of sight of the city before they were blown to the winds. Not more successful were the efforts of the sensible and moderate citizens who sighed for tranquillity within its walls. Dino Compagni's interesting, though not very orderly, narrative describes with great frankness, and with the perplexity of a simple-hearted man puzzled by the continual triumph of clever wickedness, the variety and the fruitlessness of the expedients devised by him and other good citizens against the resolute and incorrigible selfishness of the great Guelfs—ever, when checked in one form, breaking out in another; proof against all persuasion, all benefits; not to be bound by law or compact or oath; eluding or turning to its own account the deepest and sagest contrivances of constitutional wisdom.

A great battle won against Ghibelline Arezzo[2] raised the renown and the military spirit of the Guelf party; for the fame of the battle was great; the hosts contained the choicest chivalry of either side, armed and appointed with emulous splendour. The fighting was hard; there was brilliant and con-

[1] G. Villani, vii, 56.

[2] *Campaldino*, in 1289. G. Vill. vii, 131; Dino Comp., p. 14.

spicuous gallantry, and the victory was complete. It sealed Guelf ascendency. The Ghibelline warrior-bishop of Arezzo fell, with three of the Uberti, and other Ghibelline chiefs. It was a day of trial. 'Many that day who had been thought of great prowess were found dastards; and many who had never been spoken of were held in high esteem.' It repaired the honour of Florence, and the citizens showed their feeling of its importance by mixing up the marvellous with its story. Its tidings came to Florence, so runs the tale in Villani, who declares that he 'heard and saw' himself, at the very hour in which it was won. The Priors of the republic were resting in their palace during the noonday heat, when suddenly the chamber door was shaken, and the cry heard: 'Rise up! The Aretini are defeated'. The door was opened, but there was no one; their servants had seen no one enter the palace, and no one came from the army till the hour of vespers, on a long summer's day. In this battle the Guelf leaders had won great glory. The hero of the day was the proudest, handsomest, craftiest, most winning, most ambitious, most unscrupulous Guelf noble in Florence—one of a family who inherited the spirit and recklessness of the proscribed Uberti, and did not refuse the popular epithet of '*Malefami*'—Corso Donati. He did not come back from the field of Campaldino, where he had won the battle by disobeying orders, with any increased disposition to yield to rivals or court the populace or respect other men's rights. Those rivals too—and they also had fought gallantly in the post of honour at Campaldino—were such as he hated from his soul, rivals whom he despised, and who yet were too strong for him. His blood was ancient, they were upstarts; he was a soldier, they were traders; he was poor, they the richest men in Florence. They had come to live close to the Donati, they had bought the palace of an old Ghibelline family, they had enlarged, adorned, and

fortified it, and kept great state there. They had crossed him in marriages, bargains, inheritances. They had won popularity, honour, influence; and yet they were but men of business, while he had a part in all the political movements of the day. He was the friend and intimate of lords and noblemen, with great connexions and famous through all Italy; they were the favourites of the common people for their kindness and good nature; they even showed consideration for Ghibellines. He was an accomplished man of the world, keen and subtle, 'full of malicious thoughts, mischievous and crafty'; they were inexperienced in intrigue, and had the reputation of being clumsy and stupid. He was the most graceful and engaging of courtiers; they were not even gentlemen. Lastly, in the debates of that excitable republic he was the most eloquent speaker, and they were tongue-tied [1].

'There was a family', writes Dino Compagni, 'who called themselves the Cerchi, men of low estate but good merchants and very rich; and they dressed richly, and maintained many servants and horses, and made a brave show; and some of them bought the palace of the Conti Guidi, which was near the houses of the Pazzi and Donati, who were more ancient of blood but not so rich; therefore, seeing the Cerchi rise to great dignity and that they had walled and enlarged the palace and kept great state, the Donati began to have a great hatred against them.' Villani gives the same account of the feud [2]. 'It began in that quarter of scandal the Sesto of Porta S. Piero, between the Cerchi and Donati, on the one side through jealousy, on the other through churlish unthankfulness. Of the house of the Cerchi was head Messer Vieri de' Cerchi, and he and those of his house were people of great business, and powerful, and of great relationships, and most wealthy traders, so that their company was one of the greatest in the world;

[1] Dino Comp., 32, 75, 94, 133. [2] G. Vill., viii, 39.

men they were of soft life, and who meant no harm; boorish and unthankful, like people who had come in a short time to great state and power. The Donati were gentlemen and warriors, and of no excessive wealth . . . They were neighbours in Florence and in the country, and by the conversation of their jealousy with the ill-tempered boorishness of the others arose the proud scorn that there was between them.' The glories of Campaldino were not as oil on these troubled waters. The conquerors flouted each other all the more fiercely in the streets on their return, and ill-treated the lower people with less scruple. No gathering for festive or serious purposes could be held without tempting strife. A marriage, a funeral, a ball, a gay procession of cavaliers and ladies—any meeting where one stood while another sat, where horse or man might jostle another, where pride might be nettled or temper shown, was in danger of ending in blood. The lesser quarrels meanwhile ranged themselves under the greater ones; and these, especially that between the Cerchi and Donati, took more and more a political character. The Cerchi inclined more and more to the trading classes and the lower people; they threw themselves on their popularity, and began to hold aloof from the meetings of the 'Parte Guelfa', while this organized body became an instrument in the hands of their opponents, a club of the nobles. Corso Donati, besides mischief of a more substantial kind, turned his ridicule on their solemn dulness and awkward speech, and his friends the jesters, one Scampolino in particular, carried his gibes and nicknames all over Florence. The Cerchi received all in sullen and dogged indifference. They were satisfied with repelling attacks, and nursed their hatred [1].

Thus the city was divided, and the attempts to check the factions only exasperated them. It was in vain that, when at times the government or the

[1] Dino Compagni, pp. 32, 34, 38.

populace lost patience, severe measures were taken. It was in vain that the reformer, Gian della Bella, carried for a time his harsh 'orders of justice' against the nobles, and invested popular vengeance with the solemnity of law and with the pomp and ceremony of a public act—that when a noble had been convicted of killing a citizen, the great officer, 'Standard-bearer' as he was called 'of justice', issued forth in state and procession, with the banner of justice borne before him, with all his train, and at the head of the armed citizens, to the house of the criminal, and razed it to the ground. An eye-witness describes the effect of such chastisement: 'I, Dino Compagni, being Gonfalonier of Justice in 1293, went to their houses and to those of their relations, and these I caused to be pulled down according to the laws. This beginning in the case of the other Gonfaloniers came to an evil effect; because, if they demolished the houses according to the laws, the people said that they were cruel; and, if they did not demolish them completely, they said that they were cowards; and many distorted justice for fear of the people.' Gian della Bella was overthrown with few regrets even on the part of the people. Equally vain was the attempt to keep the peace by separating the leaders of the disturbances. They were banished by a kind of ostracism; they departed in ostentatious meekness, Corso Donato to plot at Rome, Vieri de' Cerchi to return immediately to Florence. Anarchy had got too fast a hold on the city; and it required a stronger hand than that of the pope or the signory of the republic to keep it down.

Yet Florence prospered. Every year it grew richer, more intellectual, more refined, more beautiful, more gay. With its anarchy there was no stagnation. Torn and divided as it was, its energy did not slacken, its busy and creative spirit was not deadened, its hopefulness not abated. The factions, fierce and personal as they were, did not hinder that

interest in political ideas, that active and subtle study of the questions of civil government, that passion and ingenuity displayed in political contrivance, which now pervaded Northern Italy, everywhere marvellously patient and hopeful, though far from being equally successful. In Venice at the close of the 13th century that polity was finally settled and consolidated by which she was great as long as cities could be imperial, and which, even in its decay, survived the monarchy of Louis XIV and existed within the memory of living men. In Florence the constructive spirit of law and order only resisted, but never triumphed. Yet it was at this time resolute and sanguine, ready with experiment and change, and not yet dispirited by continual failure. Political interest, however, and party contests were not sufficient to absorb and employ the citizens of Florence. Their genial and versatile spirit, so keen, so inventive, so elastic, which made them such hot and impetuous partisans, kept them from being only this. The time was one of growth; new knowledge, new powers, new tastes, were opening to men; new pursuits attracted them. There was commerce, there was the School philosophy, there was the science of nature, there was ancient learning, there was the civil law, there were the arts, there was poetry, all rude as yet and unformed, but full of hope—the living parents of mightier offspring. Frederick II had once more opened Aristotle to the Latin world, had given an impulse which was responded to through Italy to the study of the great monuments of Roman legislation; himself a poet, his example and his splendid court had made poetry fashionable. In the end of the 13th century a great stride was made at Florence. While her great poet was growing up to manhood, as rapid a change went on in her streets, her social customs, the wealth of her citizens, their ideas of magnificence and beauty, their appreciation of literature. It was the age of

growing commerce and travel; Franciscan missionaries had reached China, and settled there[1]; in 1294 Marco Polo returned to Venice, the first successful explorer of the East. The merchants of Florence lagged not; their field of operation was Italy and the West; they had their correspondents in London, Paris, and Bruges; they were the bankers of popes and kings[2]. And their city shows to this day the wealth and magnificence of the last years of the thirteenth century. The ancient buildings, consecrated in the memory of the Florentine people, were repaired, enlarged, adorned with marble and bronze—Or San Michele, the Badia, the Baptistery; and new buildings rose on a grander scale. In 1294 was begun the Mausoleum of the great Florentine dead, the Church of S. Croce. In the same year, a few months later, Arnolfo laid the deep foundations which were afterwards to bear up Brunelleschi's dome, and traced the plan of the magnificent cathedral. In 1298 he began to raise a Town-hall worthy of the Republic and of being the habitation of its magistrates, the frowning mass of the Palazzo Vecchio. In 1299 the third circle of the walls was commenced, with the benediction of bishops and the concourse of all the 'lords and orders' of Florence. And Giotto was now beginning to throw Cimabue into the shade—Giotto, the shepherd's boy, painter, sculptor, architect, and engineer at once, who a few years later was to complete and crown the architectural glories of Florence by that masterpiece of grace, his marble Campanile.

Fifty years made then all that striking difference in domestic habits, in the materials of dress, in the value of money, which they have usually made in later centuries. The poet of the fourteenth century

[1] See the curious letters of *John de Monte Corvino*, about his mission in Cathay, 1289—1305, in Wadding, vi, 69.

[2] e.g. the *Mozzi*, of Greg. X; *Peruzzi*, of Philip le Bel; *Spini*, of Boniface VIII; *Cerchi del Garbo*, of Benedict XI (G. Vill. vii, 42; viii, 63, 71; Dino Comp., p. 35).

describes the proudest nobleman of a hundred years before 'with his leathern girdle and clasp of bone'; and, in one of the most beautiful of all poetic celebrations of the good old times, draws the domestic life of ancient Florence in the household where his ancestor was born:

> A così riposato, a così bello
> Viver di cittadini, a così fida
> Cittadinanza, a così dolce ostello
> Maria mi diè, chiamata in alte grida—*Par.*, c. 15

there high-born dames, he says, still plied the distaff and the loom; still rocked the cradle with the words which their own mothers had used; or, working with their maidens, told them old tales of the forefathers of the city, 'of the Trojans, of Fiesole, and of Rome'. Villani still finds this rudeness within forty years of the end of the century, almost within the limits of his own and Dante's life; and speaks of that 'old first people', *il primo Popolo Vecchio*, with their coarse food and expenditure, their leather jerkins, and plain close gowns, their small dowries and late marriages, as if they were the first founders of the city, and not a generation which had lasted on into his own[1]. Twenty years later his story is of the gaiety, the riches, the profuse munificence, the brilliant festivities, the careless and joyous life, which attracted foreigners to Florence as the city of pleasure; of companies of a thousand or more, all clad in white robes, under a lord, styled 'of Love', passing their time in sports and dances; of ladies and knights, 'going through the city with trumpets and other instruments, with joy and gladness', and meeting together in banquets evening and morning; entertaining illustrious strangers, and honourably escorting them on horseback in their passage through the city; tempting by their liberality, courtiers, and wits, and minstrels, and jesters, to add to the

[1] G. Vill., vi, 69 (1259).

amusements of Florence[1]. Nor were these the boisterous triumphs of unrefined and coarse merriment. How variety of character was drawn out, how its more delicate elements were elicited and tempered, how nicely it was observed, and how finely drawn, let the racy and open-eyed story-tellers of Florence testify.

Not perhaps in these troops of revellers, but amid music and song and in the pleasant places of social and private life belonging to the Florence of arts and poetry, not to the Florence of factions and strife, should we expect to find the friend of the sweet singer, Casella, and of the reserved and bold speculator, Guido Cavalcanti—the mystic poet of the *Vita Nuova*, so sensitive and delicate, trembling at a gaze or a touch, recording visions, painting angels, composing *Canzoni* and commenting on them; finally devoting himself to the austere consolations of deep study. To superadd to such a character that of a democratic politician of the middle ages seems an incongruous and harsh combination. Yet it was a real one in this instance. The scholar's life is, in our idea of it, far separated from the practical and the political; we have been taught by our experience to disjoin enthusiasm in love, in art, in what is abstract or imaginative, from keen interest and successful interference in the affairs and conflicts of life. The practical man may sometimes be also a *dilettante;* but the dreamer or the thinker, wisely or indolently, keeps out of the rough ways where real passions and characters meet and jostle, or, if he ventures, seldom gains honour there. The separation, though a natural one, grows wider as society becomes more vast and manifold, as its ends, functions, and pursuits, are disentangled, while they multiply. But in Dante's time, and in an Italian city, it was not such a strange thing that the most refined and tender interpreter of feeling, the popular poet whose verses

[1] G. Vill., vii, 89 (1283).

touched all hearts and were in every mouth, should be also at once the ardent follower of all abstruse and difficult learning and a prominent character among those who administered the state. In that narrow sphere of action, in that period of dawning powers and circumscribed knowledge, it seemed no unreasonable hope or unwise ambition to attempt the compassing of all science, and to make it subserve and illustrate the praise of active citizenship [1]. Dante, like other literary celebrities of the time, was, not less from the custom of the day than from his own purpose, a public man. He took his place among his fellow-citizens; he went out to war with them; he fought, it is said, among the skirmishers at the great Guelf victory of Campaldino; to qualify himself for office in the democracy, he enrolled himself in one of the Guilds of the people, and was matriculated in the 'Art' of the Apothecaries; he served the state as its agent abroad; he went on important missions to the cities and courts of Italy —according to a Florentine tradition, which enumerates fourteen distinct embassies, even to Hungary and France. In the memorable year of Jubilee, 1300, he was one of the Priors of the Republic. There is no shrinking from fellowship and co-operation and conflict with the keen or bold men of the market-place and council-hall in that mind of exquisite and, as drawn by itself, exaggerated sensibility. The doings and characters of men, the workings of society, the fortunes of Italy, were watched and thought of with as deep an interest as the courses of the stars, and read in the real spectacle of life with as profound emotion as in the miraculous page of Virgil; and no scholar ever read Virgil with such feeling—no astronomer ever watched the stars with more eager inquisitiveness. The whole man opens to the world around him; all affections and powers, soul and sense, diligently and thoughtfully directed and trained, with free

[1] *Vide* the opening of the *De Monarchia.*

and concurrent and equal energy, with distinct yet harmonious purposes, seek out their respective and appropriate objects, moral, intellectual, natural, spiritual, in that admirable scene and hard field where man is placed to labour and love, to be exercised, proved, and judged.

In a fresco in the chapel of the old palace of the Podestà [1] at Florence is a portrait of Dante, said to be by the hand of his contemporary Giotto. He is represented as he might have been in the year of Campaldino. The countenance is youthful yet manly, more manly than it appears in the engravings of the picture; but it only suggests the strong deep features of the well-known traditional face. He is drawn with much of the softness and melancholy pensive sweetness, and with something also of the quaint stiffness of the *Vita Nuova*—with his flower and his book. With him is drawn his master, Brunetto Latini [2], and Corso Donati. We do not know what occasion led Giotto thus to associate him with the great 'Baron'. Dante was, indeed, closely connected with the Donati. The dwelling of his family was near theirs, in the 'Quarter of Scandal', the Ward of the Porta S. Piero. He married a daughter of their house, Madonna Gemma. None of his friends are commemorated with more affection than the companion of his light and wayward days, remembered not without a shade of anxious sadness, yet with love and hope, Corso's brother, Forese [3]. No sweeter spirit sings and smiles in the illumined spheres of Paradise than she whom Forese remembers as on earth one:

> Che tra bella e buona
> Non so qual fosse più—[4]

and who, from the depth of her heavenly joy, teaches the poet that in the lowest place among the

[1] Now a prison, the Bargello. *Vide* Vasari, *Vit. di Giotto*, p. 311. [2] He died in 1294. G. Vill., viii, 10.
[3] *Purgat.*, c. 23. [4] *Purgat.*, c. 24.

blessed there can be no envy[1]—the sister of Forese and Corso, Piccarda. The *Commedia*, though it speaks, as if in prophecy, of Corso's miserable death, avoids the mention of his name. Its silence is so remarkable as to seem significant. But, though history does not group together Corso and Dante, the picture represents the truth—their fortunes were linked together. They were actors in the same scene—at this distance of time two of the most prominent; though a scene very different from that calm and grave assembly which Giotto's placid pencil has drawn on the old chapel wall.

The outlines of this part of Dante's history are so well known that it is not necessary to dwell on them; and more than the outlines we know not. The family quarrels came to a head, issued in parties, and the parties took names; they borrowed them from two rival factions in a neighbouring town whose feud was imported into Florence; and the Guelfs became divided into the Black Guelfs, who were led by the Donati, and the White Guelfs, who sided with the Cerchi. It still professed to be but a family feud, confined to the great houses; but they were too powerful and Florence too small for it not to affect the whole Republic. The middle classes and the artizans looked on, and for a time not without satisfaction, at the strife of the great men; but it grew evident that one party must crush the other and become dominant in Florence, and of the two the Cerchi and their White adherents were less formidable to the democracy than the unscrupulous and overbearing Donati, with their military renown and lordly tastes; proud not merely of being nobles, but Guelf nobles; always loyal champions, once the martyrs and now the hereditary assertors of the great Guelf cause. The Cerchi with less character and less zeal, but rich, liberal, and showy, and with more of rough kindness and vulgar good-nature for the common people,

[1] *Parad.*, c. 3.

were more popular in Guelf Florence than the 'Parte Guelfa'; and of course the Ghibellines wished them well. Both the cotemporary historians of Florence lead us to think that they might have been the governors and guides of the Republic—if they had chosen, and had known how; and both, though condemning the two parties equally, seemed to have thought that this would have been the best result for the State. But the accounts of both, though they are very different writers, agree in their scorn of the leaders of the White Guelfs. They were upstarts, purse-proud, vain, and coarse-minded; and they dared to aspire to an ambition which they were too dull and too cowardly to pursue, when the game was in their hands. They wished to rule; but, when they might, they were afraid. The commons were on their side, the moderate men, the party of law, the lovers of republican government, and for the most part the magistrates; but they shrank from their fortune, 'more from cowardice than from goodness, because they exceedingly feared their adversaries'[1]. Boniface VIII had no prepossessions in Florence, except for energy and an open hand; the side which was most popular he would have accepted and backed; but 'he would not lose', he said, 'the men for the women.' '*Io non voglio perdere gli uomini per le femminelle*'[2]. If the Black party furnished types for the grosser or fiercer forms of wickedness in the poet's Hell, the White party surely were the originals of that picture of stupid and cowardly selfishness in the miserable crowd who moan and are buffeted in the vestibule of the Pit, mingled with the angels who dared neither to rebel nor be faithful, but '*were for themselves*'; and, whoever it may be who is singled out in the 'setta dei cattivi' for deeper and special scorn—he,

Che fece per viltà il gran rifiuto,

the idea was derived from the Cerchi in Florence.

[1] Dino Comp., p. 45. [2] Dino Comp., p. 62.

A French prince was sent by the Pope to mediate and make peace in Florence. The Black Guelfs and Corso Donati came with him. The magistrates were overawed and perplexed. The White party were, step by step, amused, entrapped, led blindly into false plots, entangled in the elaborate subtleties, and exposed with all the zest and mockery, of Italian intrigue—finally chased out of their houses and from the city, condemned unheard, outlawed, ruined in name and property, by the Pope's French mediator. With them fell many citizens who had tried to hold the balance between the two parties: for the leaders of the Black Guelfs were guilty of no errors of weakness. In two extant lists of the proscribed—condemned by default, for corruption and various crimes, especially for hindering the entrance into Florence of Charles de Valois, to a heavy fine and banishment, then, two months after, for contumacy, to be burned alive if he ever fell into the hands of the Republic—appears the name of Dante Alighieri; and more than this, concerning the history of his expulsion, we know not [1].

Of his subsequent life history tells us little more than the general character. He acted for a time in concert with the expelled party in attempting to force their way back to Florence, and gave them up at last in scorn and despair; but he never returned to Florence. And he found no new home for the rest of his days. Nineteen years, from his exile to his death, he was a wanderer. The character is stamped on his writings. History, tradition, documents, all scanty or dim, do but disclose him to us at different points, appearing here and there, we are not told how or why. One old record, discovered by antiquarian industry, shows him in a village church near Florence, planning, with the Cerchi and the White party, an attack on the Black Guelfs. In another he appears in the Val di Magra, making peace between its small potentates; in another, as the inhabitant of a certain

[1] Pelli, pp. 105, 106.

street in Padua. The traditions of some remote spots about Italy still connect his name with a ruined tower, a mountain glen, a cell in a convent. In the recollections of the following generation his solemn and melancholy form mingled reluctantly and for a while in the brilliant court of the Scaligers; and scared the women, as a visitant of the other world, as he passed by their doors in the streets of Verona. Rumour brings him to the West—with probability to Paris, more doubtfully to Oxford. But little certain can be made out about the places where he was an honoured and admired, but it may be not always a welcome guest, till we find him sheltered, cherished, and then laid at last to rest, by the Lords of Ravenna. There he still rests, in a small, solitary chapel, built not by a Florentine, but a Venetian. Florence, 'that mother of little love', asked for his bones; but rightly asked in vain. His place of repose is better in those remote and forsaken streets 'by the shore of the Adrian Sea', hard by the last relics of the Roman Empire—the mausoleum of the children of Theodosius, and the mosaics of Justinian—than among the assembled dead of S. Croce, or amid the magnificence of S. Maria del Fiore[1].

The *Commedia*, at the first glance, shows the traces of its author's life. It is the work of a wanderer. The very form in which it is cast is that of a journey, difficult, toilsome, perilous, and full of change. It is more than a working out of that touching phraseology of the middle ages, in which 'the way' was the technical theological ex-

[1] These notices have been carefully collected by Pelli, who seems to have left little to glean (*Memorie*, &c. Ed. 2da, 1823). A few additions have been made by Gerini (*Mem. Stor. della Lunigiana*), and Troya (*Veltro Allegorico*), but they are not of much importance. Arrivabene (*Secolo di Dante*), has brought together a mass of illustration which is very useful, and would be more so if he were more careful and quoted his authorities. Balbo arranges these materials with sense and good-feeling, though as a writer he is below his subject. A few traits and anecdotes may be found in the novelists—as Sacchetti.

pression for this mortal life; and '*viator*' meant man in his state of trial, as '*comprehensor*' meant man made perfect, having attained to his heavenly country. It is more than merely this. The writer's mind is full of the recollections and definite images of his various journeys. The permanent scenery of the Inferno and Purgatorio, very variously and distinctly marked, is that of travel. The descent down the sides of the Pit and the ascent of the Sacred Mountain show one familiar with such scenes—one who had climbed painfully in perilous passes and grown dizzy on the brink of narrow ledges over sea or torrent. It is scenery from the gorges of the Alps and Apennines, or the terraces and precipices of the Riviera. Local reminiscences abound —the severed rocks of the Adige valley—the waterfall of S. Benedetto—the crags of Pietra-pana and S. Leo, which overlook the plains of Lucca and Ravenna—the 'fair river' that flows among the poplars between Chiaveri and Sestri—the marble quarries of Carrara—the 'rough and desert ways between Lerici and Turbia', and those towery cliffs, going sheer into the deep sea at Noli, which travellers on the Corniche road some thirty years ago may yet remember with fear. Mountain experience furnished that picture of the traveller caught in an Alpine mist and gradually climbing above it; seeing the vapours grow thin and the sun's orb appear faintly through them, and issuing at last into sunshine on the mountain top, while the light of sunset was lost already on the shores below:

Ai raggi, morti già nei bassi lidi—*Purg.*, 17

or that image of the cold dull shadow over the torrent, beneath the Alpine fir:

Un' ombra smorta
Qual sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri
Sovra suoi freddi rivi, l' Alpe porta—*Purg.*, 33 [1]

[1] A death-like shade—
Like that beneath black boughs and foliage green
O'er the cool streams in Alpine glens displayed.—Wright.

or of the large snow-flakes falling without wind, among the mountains:

> d' un cader lento
> Piovean di fuoco dilatate falde,
> Come di neve in Alpe senza vento—*Inferno*, 14[1]

He delights in a local name and local image—the boiling pitch and the clang of the shipwrights in the arsenal of Venice, the sepulchral fields of Arles and Pola, the hot-spring of Viterbo, the hooded monks of Cologne, the dykes of Flanders and Padua, the Maremma with its rough brushwood, its wild boars, its snakes, and fevers. He had listened to the south wind among the pine-tops in the forest by the sea at Ravenna. He had watched under the Carisenda tower at Bologna, and seen the driving clouds 'give away their motion' to it, and make it seem to be falling; and had noticed how at Rome the October sun sets between Corsica and Sardinia[2]. His images of the sea are numerous and definite—the ship backing out of the tier in harbour, the diver plunging after the fouled anchor, the mast rising, the ship going fast before the wind, the water closing in its wake, the arched backs of the porpoises the forerunners of a gale, the admiral watching everything from poop to prow, the oars stopping altogether at the sound of the whistle, the swelling sails becoming slack when the mast snaps and falls[3]. Nowhere could we find so many of the most characteristic and strange sensations of the traveller touched with such truth. Everyone knows the lines which speak of the voyager's sinking of heart on the first evening at sea, and of the longings wakened, in the traveller at the beginning of

[1] O'er all the sandy desert, falling slow,
Were shower'd dilated flakes of fire, like snow
On Alpine summits, when the wind is low.—WRIGHT.

[2] *Inf.*, 31, 18.

[3] *Inf.*, 17, 16, 31; *Purg.*, 24; *Par.*, 2; *Inf.*, 22; *Purg.*, 30; *Par.*, 25; *Inf.*, 7.

his journey, by the distant evening bell[1]; the traveller's *morning* feelings are not less delicately noted —the strangeness on first waking in the open air with the sun high; morning thoughts, as day by day he wakes nearer home; the morning sight of the sea-beach quivering in the early light; the tarrying and lingering, before setting out in the morning[2]:

> Noi eravam lunghesso 'l mare ancora,
> Come gente che pensa al suo cammino,
> Che va col cuore, e col corpo dimora.[3]

He has recorded equally the anxiety, the curiosity, the suspicion, with which in those times stranger met and eyed stranger on the road; and a still more characteristic trait is to be found in those lines where he describes the pilgrim's gazing around in the church of his vow, and his thinking how he shall tell of it:

> E quasi peregrin che si ricrea
> Nel tempio del suo voto riguardando,
> E spera gia ri dir com' ello stea:—*Parad.*, 31[4]

or again, in that description, so simple and touching, of his thoughts while waiting to see the relic for which he left his home:

> Quale è colui che forse di Croazia
> Viene a veder la Veronica nostra,
> Che per l' antica fama non si sazia,
> Ma dice nel pensier, fin che si mostra;
> Signor mio Gesu Cristo Dio verace,
> Or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra?—*Parad.*, 31[5]

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[1] *Purg.*, 8. 'Era già l' ora' &c. [2] *Purg.*, 19, 27, 1, 2.

[3] By ocean's shore we still prolonged our stay
Like men, who, thinking of a journey near,
Advance in thought, while yet their limbs delay.
—WRIGHT.

[4] And like a pilgrim who with fond delight
Surveys the temple he has vowed to see,
And hopes one day its wonders to recite.—WRIGHT.

Like one who, from Croatia come to see
Our Veronica (image long adored),
Gazes, as though content he ne'er could be—

Of these years then of disappointment and exile the *Divina Commedia* was the labour and fruit. A story in Boccaccio's life of Dante, told with some detail, implies indeed that it was begun, and some progress made in it, while Dante was yet in Florence —begun in Latin, and he quotes three lines of it; continued afterwards in Italian. This is not impossible; indeed the germ and presage of it may be traced in the *Vita Nuova*. The idealized saint is there, in all the grace of her pure and noble humbleness, the guide and safeguard of the poet's soul. She is already in glory with Mary the queen of angels. She already beholds the face of the Ever-blessed. And the *envoye* of the *Vita Nuova* is the promise of the Commedia. 'After this sonnet' (in which he describes how beyond the widest sphere of heaven his love had beheld a lady receiving honour, and dazzling by her glory the unaccustomed spirit)—'after this sonnet there appeared to me a marvellous vision, in which I saw things which made me resolve not to speak more of this blessed one until such time as I should be able to indite more worthily of her. And to attain to this I study to the utmost of my power, as she truly knows. So that, if it shall be the pleasure of Him by whom all things live that my life continue for some years, I hope to say of her that which never hath been said of any woman. And afterwards, may it please Him who is the Lord of kindness that my soul may go to behold the glory of her lady, that is of that blessed Beatrice who gloriously gazes on the countenance of Him *qui est per omnia secula benedictus*'[1]. It would be wantonly violating probability and the unity of a great life to suppose that this purpose, though transformed, was ever forgotten or laid aside.

Thus musing, while the relic is pourtrayed—
'Jesus my God, my Saviour, and my Lord,
O were thy features these I see displayed?'—Wright.

[1] *Vita Nuova*, last paragraph. See *Purg.*, 30; *Parad.*, 30, 6, 28–33.

The poet knew not indeed what he was promising, what he was pledging himself to—through what years of toil and anguish he would have to seek the light and the power he had asked, in what form his high venture should be realized. But the *Commedia* is the work of no light resolve, and we need not be surprised at finding the resolve and the purpose at the outset of the poet's life. We may freely accept the key supplied by the words of the *Vita Nuova*. The spell of boyhood is never broken through the ups and downs of life. His course of thought advances, alters, deepens, but is continuous. From youth to age, from the first glimpse to the perfect work, the same idea abides with him, 'even from the flower till the grape was ripe'. It may assume various changes—an image of beauty, a figure of philosophy, a voice from the other world, a type of heavenly wisdom and joy; but still it holds, in self-imposed and willing thraldom, that creative and versatile and tenacious spirit. It was the dream and hope of too deep and strong a mind to fade and come to naught—to be other than the seed of the achievement and crown of life. But, with all faith in the star and the freedom of genius, we may doubt whether the prosperous citizen would have done that which was done by the man without a home. Beatrice's glory might have been sung in grand though barbarous Latin to the literati of the fourteenth century, or a poem of new beauty might have fixed the language and opened the literature of modern Italy; but it could hardly have been the *Commedia*. That belongs, in its date and its greatness, to the time when sorrow had become the poet's daily portion and the condition of his life.

The *Commedia* is a novel and startling apparition in literature. Probably it has been felt by some who have approached it with the reverence due to a work of such renown that the world has been generous in placing it so high. It seems so abnormal, so lawless, so reckless of all ordinary pro-

prieties and canons of feeling, taste, and composition. It is rough and abrupt; obscure in phrase and allusion, doubly obscure in purpose. It is a medley of all subjects usually kept distinct: scandal of the day and transcendental science, politics and confessions, coarse satire and angelic joy, private wrongs, with the mysteries of the faith, local names and habitations of earth, with visions of hell and heaven. It is hard to keep up with the ever-changing current of feeling, to pass as the poet passes, without effort or scruple, from tenderness to ridicule, from hope to bitter scorn or querulous complaint, from high-raised devotion to the calmness of prosaic subtleties or grotesque detail. Each separate element and vein of thought has its precedent, but not their amalgamation. Many had written visions of the unseen world, but they had not blended with them their personal fortunes. S. Augustine had taught the soul to contemplate its own history, and had traced its progress from darkness to light[1]; but he had not interwoven with it the history of Italy and the consummation of all earthly destinies. Satire was no new thing; Juvenal had given it a moral, some of the Provençal poets a political, turn; S. Jerome had kindled into it fiercely and bitterly even while expounding the Prophets; but here it streams forth in all its violence within the precincts of the eternal world, and alternates with the hymns of the blessed. Lucretius had drawn forth the poetry of nature and its laws; Virgil and Livy had unfolded the poetry of the Roman empire; S. Augustine the still grander poetry of the history of the City of God; but none had yet ventured to weave into one the three wonderful threads. And yet the scope of the Italian poet, vast and comprehensive as the issue of all things, universal as the government which directs nature and intelligence, forbids him not to stoop to the lowest caitiff he has ever despised, the minutest fact in nature

[1] See *Convito*, 1, 2.

that has ever struck his eye, the merest personal association which hangs pleasantly in his memory. Writing for all time, he scruples not to mix with all that is august and permanent in history and prophecy, incidents the most transient and names the most obscure; to waste an immortality of shame or praise on those about whom his own generation were to inquire in vain. Scripture history runs into profane; Pagan legends teach their lesson side by side with Scripture scenes and miracles; heroes and poets of heathenism, separated from their old classic world, have their place in the world of faith, discourse with Christians of Christian dogmas, and even mingle with the Saints; Virgil guides the poet through his fear and his penitence to the gates of Paradise.

This feeling of harsh and extravagant incongruity, of causeless and unpardonable darkness, is perhaps the first impression of many readers of the *Commedia.* But probably, as they read on, there will mingle with this a sense of strange and unusual grandeur, arising not alone from the hardihood of the attempt and the mystery of the subject, but from the power and the character of the poet. It will strike them that words cut deeper than is their wont; that from that wild uncongenial imagery thoughts emerge of singular truth and beauty. Their dissatisfaction will be chequered, even disturbed—for we can often bring ourselves to sacrifice much for the sake of a clear and consistent view—by the appearance, amid much that repels them, of proofs undeniable and accumulating of genius as mighty as it is strange. Their perplexity and disappointment may grow into distinct condemnation, or it may pass into admiration and delight; but no one has ever come to the end of the *Commedia* without feeling that, if it has given him a new view and specimen of the wildness and unaccountable waywardness of the human mind, it has also added, as few other books have, to his knowledge of its feel-

ings, its capabilities, and its grasp, and suggested larger and more serious thoughts, for which he may be grateful, concerning that unseen world of which he is even here a member.

Dante would not have thanked his admirers for becoming apologists. Those in whom the sense of imperfection and strangeness overpowers sympathy for grandeur and enthusiasm for nobleness and joy in beauty he certainly would have left to themselves. But neither would he teach any that he was leading them along a smooth and easy road. The *Commedia* will always be a hard and trying book; nor did the writer much care that it should be otherwise. Much of this is no doubt to be set down to its age; much of its roughness and extravagance as well as of its beauty—its allegorical spirit, its frame, and scenery. The idea of a visionary voyage through the worlds of pain and bliss is no invention of the poet—it was one of the commonest and most familiar mediæval vehicles of censure or warning; and those who love to trace the growth and often strange fortunes of popular ideas, or whose taste leads them to disbelieve in genius and track the parentage of great inventions to the foolish and obscure, may find abundant materials in the literature of legends [1]. But his own age—the age which received the *Commedia* with mingled enthusiasm and wonder, and called it 'the Divine', was as much perplexed as we are, though probably rather pleased thereby than offended. That within a century after its composition, in the more famous cities and universities of Italy, Florence, Venice, Bologna, and Pisa, chairs should have been founded, and illustrious men engaged to lecture on it, is a strange homage to its power, even in that time of quick feeling, but as strange and great a proof of its obscurity. What is dark and forbidding in it was scarcely more clear to the poet's contemporaries.

[1] *Vide* Ozanam, *Dante*, pp. 535 *sqq*. Ed. 2de.

And he, whose last object was amusement, invites no audience but a patient and confiding one.

> O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
> Desiderosi di ascoltar, seguiti
> Dietro al mio legno chè cantando varca,
> Tornate a riveder li vostri liti:
> Non vi mettete in pelago, che forse
> Perdendo me rimarreste smarriti.
> L' acqua ch' io prendo giammai non si corse:
> Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo,
> E nuove muse mi dimostran l' Orse.
> Voi altri pochi, che drizzaste 'l collo
> Per tempo al pan degli angeli, del quale
> Vivesi qui, ma non si vien satollo,
> Metter potete ben per l' alto sale
> Vostro navigio, servando mio solco
> Dinanzi all' acqua che ritorna eguale.
> Que' gloriosi che passaro a Colco,
> Non s' ammiraron, come voi farete,
> Quando Jason vider fatto bifolco.—*Parad.*, 2[1]

The character of the *Commedia* belongs much more, in its excellence and its imperfections, to the poet himself and the nature of his work than to his age. That cannot screen his faults, nor can it

[1] O ye who fain would listen to my song,
Following in little bark full eagerly
My venturous ship, that chanting hies along,
Turn back unto your native shores again;
Tempt not the deep, lest haply, losing me,
In unknown paths bewildered ye remain.
I am the first this voyage to essay;
Minerva breathes—Apollo is my guide;
And new-born muses do the Bears display.
Ye other few, who have looked up on high
For angels' food betimes, e'en here supplied
Largely, but not enough to satisfy—
Mid the deep ocean ye your course may take,
My track pursuing the pure waters through,
Ere reunites the quickly-closing wake.
Those glorious ones who drove of yore their prow
To Colchos wondered not as ye will do,
When they saw Jason working at the plough.
—WRIGHT.

arrogate to itself—it must be content to share—his glory. His leading idea and line of thought was much more novel then than it is now, and belongs much more to the modern than the mediæval world. The 'Story of a Life', the poetry of man's journey through the wilderness to his true country, is now in various and very different shapes as hackneyed a form of imagination as an allegory, an epic, a legend of chivalry, were in former times. Not, of course, that any time has been without its poetical feelings and ideas on the subject; and never were they deeper and more diversified, more touching and solemn, than in the ages that passed from S. Augustine and S. Gregory to S. Thomas and S. Bonaventura. But a philosophical poem where they were not merely the colouring but the subject, an *epos* of the soul placed for its trial in a fearful and wonderful world, with relations to time and matter, history and nature, good and evil, the beautiful, the intelligible, and the mysterious, sin and grace, the infinite and the eternal—and having in the company and under the influences of other intelligences to make its choice, to struggle, to succeed or fail, to gain the light, or be lost—this was a new and unattempted theme. It has been often tried since, in faith or doubt, in egotism, in sorrow, in murmuring, in affectation, sometimes in joy—in various forms, in prose and verse, completed or fragmentary, in reality or fiction, in the direct or the shadowed story, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in the *Confessions*, in *Wilhelm Meister*, and *Faust*, in *The Excursion*. It is common enough now for the poet, in the faith of human sympathy and sense of the unexhausted vastness of his mysterious subject, to believe that his fellows will not see without interest and profit glimpses of his own path and fortunes—hear from his lips the disclosure of his chief delights, his warnings, his fears—follow the many-coloured changes, the impressions and workings of a character at once the contrast and the counterpart to their

own. But it was a new path then; and he needed to be, and was, a bold man who first opened it—a path never trod without peril, usually with loss or failure.

And certainly no great man ever made less secret to himself of his own genius. He is at no pains to rein in or to dissemble his consciousness of power, which he has measured without partiality and feels sure will not fail him. 'Fidandomi di me più che di un altro '[1] is a reason which he assigns without reserve. We look with the distrust and hesitation of modern days, yet, in spite of ourselves, not without admiration and regret, at such frank hardihood. It was more common once than now. When the world was young, it was more natural and allowable—it was often seemly and noble. Men knew not their difficulties as we know them—we, to whom time, which has taught so much wisdom, has brought so many disappointments—we who have seen how often the powerful have fallen short and the noble gone astray and the most admirable missed their perfection. It is becoming in us to distrust ourselves—to be shy if we cannot be modest: it is but a respectful tribute to human weakness and our brethren's failures. But there was a time when great men dared to claim their greatness—not in foolish self-complacency, but in unembarrassed and majestic simplicity, in magnanimity and truth, in the consciousness of a serious and noble purpose and of strength to fulfil it. Without passion, without elation as without shrinking, the poet surveys his superiority and his high position as something external to him; he has no doubts about it, and affects none. He would be a coward if he shut his eyes to what he could do; as much a trifler in displaying reserve as ostentation. Nothing is more striking in the *Commedia* than the serene and unhesitating confidence with which he announces himself the heir and reviver of the poetic power so

[1] *Convito*, 1, 10.

long lost to the world—the heir and reviver of it in all its fulness. He doubts not of the judgment of posterity. One has arisen who shall throw into the shade all modern reputations, who shall bequeath to Christendom the glory of that name of Poet, 'che più dura e più onora', hitherto the exclusive boast of heathenism, and claim the rare honours of the laurel:

> Si rade volte, padre, se ne coglie
> Per trionfare o Cesáre o poeta
> (Colpa e vergogna dell' umane voglie)
> Che partorir letizia in su la lieta
> Delfica deità dovria la fronda
> Peneia quando alcun di sè asseta.—*Parad.*, 1[1]

He has but to follow his star to be sure of the glorious port[2]; he is the master of language; he can give fame to the dead—no task or enterprise appals him for whom spirits keep watch in heaven and angels have visited the shades—'tal si partì dal cantar alleluia'—who is Virgil's foster-child and familiar friend. Virgil bids him lay aside the last vestige of fear. Virgil is to 'crown him king and priest over himself'[3], for a higher venture than

[1] For now so rarely Poet gathers these,
Or Cæsar, winning an immortal praise
(Shame unto man's degraded energies),
That joy should to the Delphic God arise,
When haply any one aspires to gain
The high reward of the Peneian prize.—Wright.

[2] Brunetto Latini's Prophecy, *Inf.*, 15.

[3] See the grand ending of *Purg.*, 27.

> Tratto t' ho qui con ingegno e con arte:
> Lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce:
> Fuor se' dell' erte vie, fuor se' dell' arte.
> Vedi il sole che 'n fronte ti riluce.
> Vedi l' erbetta i fiori e gli arboscelli
> Che questa terra sol da se produce.
> Mentre che vegnon lieti gli occhi belli
> Che lagrimando a te venir mi fenno,
> Seder ti puoi e puoi andar tra elli.
> Non aspettar mio dir più nè mio cenno:

heathen poetry had dared; in Virgil's company he takes his place without diffidence and without vain-glory, among the great poets of old—a sister soul[1].

> Poichè la voce fu restata e queta,
> Vidi quattro grand' ombre a noi venire:
> Sembianza avean nè trista nè lieta:
> * * *
> Così vidi adunar la bella scuola
> Di quei signor dell' altissimo canto
> Che sovra gli altri come aquila vola.
> Da ch' ebber ragionato insieme alquanto
> Volsersi a me con salutevol cenno
> E 'l mio maestro sorrise di tanto.
> E più d' onore ancora assai mi fenno:
> Ch' essi mi fecer della loro schiera,
> Sì ch' io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.—*Inf.*, 4[2]

This sustained magnanimity and lofty self-reliance, which never betrays itself, is one of the main elements of the grandeur of the *Commedia*. It is an imposing spectacle to see such fearlessness, such freedom, and such success in an untried path, amid unprepared materials and rude instruments, models scanty and only half understood, powers of language still doubtful and suspected, the deepest and

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> Libero, dritto, sano è tuo arbitrio,
> E fallo fora non fare a suo senno:
> Perch 'io te sopra te corono e mitrio.

1 *Purg.*, c. 21.

2 Ceased had the voice—when in composed array
Four mighty shades approaching I surveyed;—
Nor joy, nor sorrow did their looks betray.
* * *
Assembled thus, was offered to my sight
The school of him, the Prince of poetry,
Who, eagle-like, o'er others takes his flight.
When they together had conversed awhile,
They turned to me with salutation bland,
Which from my master drew a friendly smile:
And greater glory still they bade me share,
Making me join their honourable band—
The sixth united to such genius rare.—WRIGHT.

strongest thought still confined to unbending forms and the harshest phrase; exact and extensive knowledge, as yet far out of reach; with no help from time, which familiarizes all things and of which, manner, elaboration, judgment, and taste, are the gifts and inheritance—to see the poet, trusting to his eye 'which saw everything '[1] and his searching and creative spirit, venture undauntedly into all regions of thought and feeling, to draw thence a picture of the government of the universe.

But such greatness had to endure its price and its counterpoise. Dante was alone: except in his visionary world, solitary and companionless. The blind Greek had his throng of listeners; the blind Englishman his home and the voices of his daughters; Shakespeare had his free associates of the stage; Goethe, his correspondents, a court, and all Germany to applaud. Not so Dante. The friends of his youth are already in the region of spirits, and meet him there—Casella, Forese; Guido Cavalcanti will soon be with them. In this upper world he thinks and writes as a friendless man to whom all that he had held dearest was either lost or embittered—for himself.

And so he is his own law; he owns no tribunal of opinion or standard of taste except among the great dead. He hears them exhort him to 'let the world talk on—to stand like a tower unshaken by the winds '[2]. He fears to be 'a timid friend to truth', 'to lose life among those who shall call this present time antiquity '[3]. He belongs to no party.

[1] 'Dante che tutto vedea.'—Sacchetti, *Nov.* 114.
[2] *Purg.*, 5.
[3] *Parad.*, 17.

> La luce in che rideva il mio tesoro
> Ch' io trovai lì, si fe' prima corrusca,
> Quale a raggio di sole specchio d'oro;
> Indi rispose: coscienza fusca
> O della propria o dell' altrui vergogna
> Pur sentirà la tua parola brusca;

He is his own arbiter of the beautiful and the becoming, his own judge over right and injustice, innocence and guilt. He has no followers to secure, no school to humour, no public to satisfy; nothing to guide him, and nothing to consult, nothing to bind him, nothing to fear, out of himself. In full trust in heart and will, in his sense of truth, in his teeming brain, he gives himself free course. If men have idolized the worthless and canonized the base, he reverses their award without mercy and without apology; if they have forgotten the just because he was obscure, he remembers him: if 'Monna Berta and Ser Martino'[1], the wimpled and hooded gossips of the day, with their sage company, have settled it to their own satisfaction that Providence cannot swerve from their general rules, cannot save where they have doomed, or reject where they have approved—he both fears more and hopes more. Deeply reverent to the judgment of the ages past, reverent to the persons whom they have immortal-

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Ma nondimen, rimossa ogni menzogna,
Tutta tua vision fa manifesta,
E lascia pur grattar dov' è la rogna:
Che se la voce tua sarà molesta
Nel primo gusto, vital nutrimento
Lascerà poi quando sarà digesta.
Questo tuo grido farà come vento
Che le più alte cime più percuote:
E ciò non fa d' onor poco argomento.
Però ti son mostrate, in queste ruote.
Nel monte, e nella valle dolorosa,
Pur l' anime che son di fama note.
Che l' animo di quel ch' ode non posa
Nè ferma fede, per esemplo ch' aja
La sua radice incognita e nascosa,
Nè per altro argumento che non paja.

1 *Parad.*, 13.

Non creda Monna Berta e Ser Martino
Per veder un furare, altro offerere,
Vederli dentro al consiglio divino:
Che quel può surger, e quel può cadere.

ized for good and even for evil, in his own day he cares for no man's person and no man's judgment. And he shrinks not from the auguries and forecastings of his mind about their career and fate. Men reasoned rapidly in those days on such subjects, and without much scruple, but not with such deliberate and discriminating sternness. The most popular and honoured names in Florence,

> Farinata e 'l Tegghiaio, che fur sì degni,
> Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, e 'l Mosca,
> E gli altri, ch' a ben far poser gl' ingegni,

have yet the damning brand: no reader of the *Inferno* can have forgotten the shock of that terrible reply to the poet's questionings about their fate:

> Ei son tra l' anime piu nere [1].

If he is partial, it is no vulgar partiality: friendship and old affection do not venture to exempt from its fatal doom the sin of his famous master, Brunetto Latini [2]; nobleness and great deeds, a kindred character and common wrongs, are not enough to redeem Farinata; and he who could tell her story bowed to the eternal law, and dared not save Francesca. If he condemns by a severer rule than that of the world, he absolves with fuller faith in the possibilities of grace. Many names of whom history has recorded no good are marked by him for bliss, yet not without full respect for justice. The penitent of the last hour is saved, but he suffers loss. Manfred's soul is rescued; mercy had accepted his tears, and forgiven his great sins; and the excommunication of his enemy did not bar his salvation:

> Per lor maladizion sì non si perde
> Che non possa tornar l' eterno amore
> Mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde.—*Purg.*, 3.

Yet his sin, though pardoned, was to keep him for

[1] *Inf.*, 6.

[2] Che in la mente m' è fitta, ed or m' accuora,
La cara buona imagine paterna.—Inf., 15.

long years from the perfection of heaven[1]. And with the same independence with which he assigns their fate he selects his instances—instances which are to be the types of character and its issues. No man ever owned more unreservedly the fascination of greatness, its sway over the imagination and the heart; no one prized more the grand harmony and sense of fitness which there is when the great man and the great office are joined in one and reflect each other's greatness. The famous and great of all ages are gathered in the poet's vision; the great names even of fable—Geryon and the giants, the Minotaur and Centaurs, and the heroes of Thebes and Troy. But not the great and famous only: this is too narrow, too conventional a sphere; it is not real enough. He felt, what the modern world feels so keenly, that wonderful histories are latent in the inconspicuous paths of life, in the fugitive incidents of the hour, among the persons whose faces we have seen. The Church had from the first been witness to the deep interest of individual life. The rising taste for novels showed that society at large was beginning to be alive to it. And it is this feeling—that behind the veil there may be grades of greatness but nothing insignificant—that led Dante to refuse to restrict himself to the characters of fame. He will associate with them the living men who have stood round him; they are part of the same company with the greatest. That they have interested him, touched him, moved his indignation or pity, struck him as examples of great vicissitude or of a perfect life, have pleased him, loved him—this is enough why they should live in his poem as they have lived to him. He chooses at will; history, if it has been negligent at the time about those whom he thought worthy of

[1] Charles of Anjou, his Guelf conqueror, is placed above him, in the valley of the kings (*Purg.*, 7), 'Colui dal maschio naso'—notwithstanding the charges afterwards made against him (*Purg.*, 20).

renown, must be content with its loss. He tells their story, or touches them with a word like the most familiar names, according as he pleases. The obscure highway robber, the obscure betrayer of his sister's honour—Rinier da Corneto and Rinier Pazzo, and Caccianimico—are ranked, not according to their obscurity but according to the greatness of their crimes, with the famous conquerors, and 'scourges of God', and seducers of the heroic age, Pyrrhus and Attila, and the great Jason of 'royal port, who sheds no tear in his torments'[1]. He earns as high praise from Virgil for his curse on the furious wrath of the old frantic Florentine burgher as if he had cursed the disturber of the world's peace[2]. And so in the realms of joy, among the faithful accomplishers of the highest trust, kings and teachers of the nations, founders of orders, sainted empresses, appear those whom, though the world had forgotten or misread them, the poet had enshrined in his familiar thoughts for their sweetness, their gentle goodness, their nobility of soul; the penitent, the nun, the old crusading ancestor, the pilgrim who had deserted the greatness which he had created, the brave logician, who 'syllogized unpalatable truths' in the Quartier Latin of Paris[3].

There is small resemblance in all this—this arbitrary and imperious tone, this range of ideas, feelings, and images, this unshackled freedom, this harsh reality—to the dreamy gentleness of the *Vita Nuova* or even the staid argumentation of the more mature *Convito*. The *Vita Nuova* is all self-con-

1 See the magnificent picture *Inf.*, 18. 2 *Inf.*, 8.

3 Cunizza, Piccarda, Cacciaguida, Roméo (*Parad.*, 9, 3 15, 6; 10).

La luce eterna di Sigieri
Che leggendo nel vico degli Strami
Sillogizzò invidiosi veri——

in company with S. Thomas Aquinas, in the sphere of the Sun. Ozanam gives a few particulars of this forgotten professor of the 'Rue du Fouarre', pp. 320–3.

centration—a brooding, not unpleased, over the varying tides of feeling which are little influenced by the world without; where every fancy, every sensation, every superstition, of the lover is detailed with the most whimsical subtlety. The *Commedia*, too, has its tenderness—and that more deep, more natural, more true, than the poet had before adapted to the traditionary formulæ of the 'Courts of Love' —the eyes of Beatrice are as bright, and the 'conquering light of her smile'[1]; they still culminate, but they are not alone, in the poet's heaven. And the professed subject of the *Commedia* is still Dante's own story and life; he still makes himself the central point. And steeled as he is by that high and hard experience of which his poem is the projection and type—'Ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura'—a stern and brief-spoken man, set on objects, and occupied with a theme lofty and vast as can occupy man's thoughts, he still lets escape ever and anon some passing avowal of delicate sensitiveness[2], lingers for a moment on some indulged self-consciousness, some recollection of his once quick and changeful mood—'io che son tras-

[1] 'Vincendo me col lume d' un sorriso.'—*Parad.*, 18.

[2] For instance, his feeling of distress at gazing at the blind, who were not aware of his presence:

> A me pareva andando fare oltraggio
> Vedendo altrui, non essendo veduto—*Purg.*, 13.

and of shame, at being tempted to listen to a quarrel between two lost spirits:

> Ad ascoltarli er' io del tutto fisso,
> Quando 'l Maestro mi disse: or pur mira,
> Che per poco è, che teco non mi risso.
> Quando io 'l senti' a me parlar con ira
> Volsimi verso lui con tal vergogna,
> Ch' ancor per la memoria mi si gira, &c.—*Inf.*, 30

and the burst:

> O dignitosa coscienza e netta,
> Come t' è picciol fallo amaro morso.—*Purg.*, 3.

mutabil per tutte guise '[1]—or half playfully alludes to the whispered name of a lady[2] whose pleasant courtesy has beguiled a few days of exile. But he is no longer spell-bound and entangled in fancies of his own weaving, absorbed in the unprofitable contemplation of his own internal sensations. The man is indeed the same, still a Florentine, still metaphysical, still a lover. He returns to the haunts and images of youth, to take among them his poet's crown; but 'with other voice and other garb '[3], a penitent and a prophet—with larger thoughts, wider sympathies, freer utterance; sterner and fiercer, yet nobler and more genuine in his tenderness—as one whom trial has made serious and keen and intolerant of evil, but not sceptical or callous; yet with the impressions and memories of a very different scene from his old day-dreams.

'After that it was the pleasure of the citizens of that fairest and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom (wherein I had been nourished up to the maturity of my life, and in which, with all peace to her, I long with all my heart to rest my weary soul, and finish the time which is given me), I have passed through almost all the regions to which this language reaches, a wanderer, almost a beggar, displaying against my will the stroke of fortune, which is ofttimes unjustly wont to be imputed to the person stricken. Truly I have been a ship without a sail or helm, carried to divers harbours and gulfs and shores by that parching wind which sad poverty breathes; and I have seemed vile in the eyes of many who perchance, from some fame, had imagined of me in another form; in the sight of whom not only did my presence become naught, but every work of mine less prized, both what had been and what was to be wrought.—*Convito*, Tr. i, c. 3.

Thus proved, and thus furnished—thus independent and confident, daring to trust his instinct and genius in what was entirely untried and unusual, he entered on his great poem, to shadow forth, under the figure of his own conversion and purification, not

[1] *Parad.* 5. [2] *Purg.*, 24. [3] *Parad.* 25.

merely how a single soul rises to its perfection, but how this visible world in all its phases of nature, life, and society, is one with the invisible which borders on it, actuates, accomplishes, and explains it. It is this vast plan—to take into his scope not the soul only in its struggles and triumph, but all that the soul finds itself engaged with in its course; the accidents of the hour and of ages past; the real persons, great and small, apart from and without whom it cannot think or act; the material world, its theatre and home—which gives so many various sides to the *Commedia*, which makes it so novel and strange It is not a mere personal history or a pouring forth of feeling, like the *Vita Nuova*, though he is himself the mysterious voyager and he opens without reserve his actual life and his heart; he speaks indeed in the first person, yet he is but a character of the drama, and in great part of it with not more of distinct personality than in that paraphrase of the penitential Psalms, in which he has preluded so much of the *Commedia*. Yet the *Commedia* is not a pure allegory; it admits and makes use of the allegorical, but the laws of allegory are too narrow for it; the real in it is too impatient of the veil, and breaks through in all its hardness and detail into what is most shadowy. History is indeed viewed not in its ephemeral look but under the light of God's final judgments; in its completion, not in its provisional and fragmentary character; viewed therefore but in faith; but its issues, which in this confused scene we ordinarily contemplate in the gross, the poet brings down to detail and individuals: he faces and grasps the tremendous thought that the very men and women whom we see and speak to are now the real representatives of sin and goodness, the true actors in that scene which is so familiar to us as a picture—unflinching and terrible heart, he endures to face it in its most harrowing forms. But he wrote not for sport nor to give poetic pleasure; he wrote to warn; the

seed of the *Commedia* was sown in tears and reaped in misery; and the consolations which it offers are awful as they are real.

Thus, though he throws into symbol and image what can be expressed only by symbol and image, we can as little forget in reading him this real world in which we live as we can in one of Shakespeare's plays. It is not merely that the poem is crowded with real personages, most of them having the single interest to us of being real. But all that is associated with man's history and existence is interwoven with the main course of thought—all that gives character to life, all that gives it form and feature, even to quaintness, all that occupies the mind, or employs the hand—speculation, science, arts, manufactures, monuments, scenes, customs, proverbs, ceremonies, games, punishments, attitudes of men, habits of living creatures. The wildest and most unearthly imaginations, the most abstruse thoughts take up into and incorporate with themselves the forcible and familiar impressions of our mother earth, and do not refuse the company and aid even of the homeliest.

This is not mere poetic ornament, peculiarly, profusely, or extravagantly employed. It is one of the ways in which his dominant feeling expresses itself—spontaneous and instinctive in each several instance of it, but the kindling and effluence of deliberate thought, and attending on a clear purpose—the feeling of the real and intimate connexion between the objects of sight and faith. It is not that he sees in one the simple counterpart and reverse of the other, or sets himself to trace out universally their mutual correspondences; he has too strong a sense of the reality of this familiar life to reduce it merely to a shadow and type of the unseen. What he struggles to express in countless ways, with all the resources of his strange and gigantic power, is that this world and the next are both equally real, and both one—parts, however

different, of one whole. The world to come we know but in 'a glass darkly'; man can only think and imagine of it in images, which he knows to be but broken and faint reflections; but this world we know, not in outline and featureless idea, but by name, and face, and shape, by place and person, by the colours and forms which crowd over its surface, the men who people its habitations, the events which mark its moments. Detail fills the sense here and is the mark of reality. And thus he seeks to keep alive the feeling of what that world is which he connects with heaven and hell; not by abstractions, not much by elaborate and highly-finished pictures, but by names, persons, local features, definite images. Widely and keenly has he ranged over and searched into the world—with a largeness of mind which disdained not to mark and treasure up, along with much unheeded beauty, many a characteristic feature of nature, unnoticed because so common. All his pursuits and interests contribute to the impression which, often instinctively it may be, he strives to produce of the manifold variety of our life. As a man of society, his memory is full of its usages, formalities, graces, follies, fashions—of expressive motions, postures, gestures, looks—of music, of handicrafts, of the conversation of friends or associates—of all that passes, so transiently yet so keenly pleasant or distasteful, between man and man. As a traveller, he recalls continually the names and scenes of the world; as a man of speculation, the secrets of nature—the phenomena of light, the theory of the planets' motions, the idea and laws of physiology. As a man of learning, he is filled with the thoughts and recollections of ancient fable and history; as a politician, with the thoughts, prognostications, and hopes, of the history of the day; as a moral philosopher, he has watched himself, his external sensations and changes, his inward passions, his mental powers, his ideas, his conscience; he has far and

wide noted character, discriminated motives, classed good and evil deeds. All that the man of society, of travel, of science, of learning, the politician, the moralist, could gather is used at will in the great poetic structure; but all converges to the purpose, and is directed by the intense feeling of the theologian, who sees this wonderful and familiar scene melting into and ending in another yet more wonderful, but which will one day be as familiar—who sees the difficult but sure progress of the manifold remedies of the Divine government to their predestined issue, and, over all, God and His saints.

So comprehensive in interest is the *Commedia*. Any attempt to explain it by narrowing that interest to politics, philosophy, the moral life, or theology itself, must prove inadequate. Theology strikes the key-note, but history, natural and metaphysical science, poetry, and art, each in its turn, join in the harmony, independent yet ministering to the whole. If from the poem itself we could be for a single moment in doubt of the reality and dominant place of religion in it, the plain spoken prose of the *Convito* would show how he placed 'the Divine Science, full of all peace, and allowing no strife of opinions and sophisms, for the excellent certainty of its subject, which is God', in single perfection above all other sciences, 'which are, as Solomon speaks, but queens, or concubines, or maidens; but she is the "Dove" and the "perfect one"—"Dove" because without stain of strife, "perfect" because perfectly she makes us behold the truth, in which our soul stills itself and is at rest.' But the same passage[1] shows likewise how he viewed all human knowledge and human interests as holding their due place in the hierarchy of wisdom and among the steps of man's perfection. No account of the *Commedia* will prove sufficient which does not keep in view, first of all, the high moral purpose and deep spirit of faith with which

[1] *Convito*, Tr. 2, c. 14, 15.

it was written, and then the wide liberty of materials and means which the poet allowed himself in working out his design.

Doubtless, his writings have a political aspect. The 'great Ghibelline poet' is one of Dante's received synonyms; of his strong political opinions and the importance he attached to them there can be no doubt. And he meant his poem to be the vehicle of them and the record to all ages of the folly and selfishness with which he saw men governed. That he should take the deepest interest in the goings on of his time is part of his greatness; to suppose that he stopped at them, or that he subordinated to political objects or feelings all the other elements of his poem, is to shrink up that greatness into very narrow limits. Yet this has been done by men of mark and ability, by Italians, by men who read the *Commedia* in their own mother-tongue. It has been maintained as a satisfactory account of it, maintained with great labour and pertinacious ingenuity, that Dante meant nothing more by his poem than the conflicts and ideal triumph of a political party. The hundred cantos of that Vision of the Universe are but a manifesto of the Ghibelline propaganda, a sort of Ghibelline and mediæval *Histoire de Dix Ans*, designed, under the veil of historic images and scenes, to insinuate what it was dangerous to announce; and Beatrice in all her glory and sweetness is but a specimen of the jargon, cant, and slang of Ghibelline freemasonry. To Professor Rosetti must belong the distinction of having degraded the greatest name of his country to a depth of laborious imbecility to which the trifling of schoolmen and academicians is as nothing; of having solved the enigma of Dante's works by imagining for him a character in which it is hard to say which predominates, the pedant, mountebank, or infidel. After that we may read Voltaire's sneers with patience, and even enter with gravity on the examination of Father

Hardouin's *Historic Doubts.* The fanaticism of a perhaps outraged but essentially foolish liberalism is but a poor excuse for such dulness of heart and perverseness of intellect [1].

Dante was not a Ghibelline, though he longed for the interposition of an Imperial power. Historically, he was not. It is true that he forsook the Guelfs, with whom he had been brought up, and that the White Guelfs, with whom he was expelled from Florence, were at length merged and lost in the Ghibelline party [2]; and he acted with them for a time [3]. But no words can be stronger than those in which he disjoins himself from that 'evil and foolish company', and claims his independence:

> A te fia bello
> *Averti fatto parte per te stesso.*[4]

And it is not easy to conceive a Ghibelline partisan putting into the mouth of Justinian, the type of law and empire, a general condemnation of his party as heavy as that of their antagonists—the crime of having betrayed, as the Guelfs had resisted, the great symbol of public right:

> Omai puoi giudicar di que' cotali
> Ch' io accusai di sopra, e de' lor falli
> Che son cagion di tutti i vostri mali.
> L' uno al pubblico segno i gigli gialli
> Oppone, e *quel s' appropria l'altro a parte,*
> Sì ch' è forte a veder qual più si falli.
> *Faccian li Ghibellin, faccian lor arte*
> *Sott' altro segno; che mal segue quello*
> *Sempre chi la giustizia e lui diparte.*[5]

And though, as the victim of the Guelfs of Flo-

[1] In the *Remains of Arthur Henry Hallam* is a paper in which he examines and disposes of this theory with a courteous and forbearing irony which would have deepened probably into something more on thinking over it a second time.

[2] Dino Comp., pp. 89–91.

[3] His name appears among the White delegates in 1307. Pelli, p. 117.

[4] *Parad.*, 17.

[5] *Parad.*, 6.



rence, he found refuge among Ghibelline princes, he had friends among Guelfs also. His steps and his tongue were free to the end. And in character and feeling, in his austerity, his sturdiness and roughness, his intolerance of corruption and pride, his strongly-marked devotional temper, he was much less a Ghibelline than like one of those stern Guelfs who hailed Savonarola.

But he had a very decided and complete political theory, which certainly was not Guelf; and, as parties then were, it was not much more Ghibelline. Most assuredly no set of men would have more vigorously resisted the attempt to realize his theory, would have joined more heartily with all immediate opponents—Guelfs, Black, White, and Green, or even Boniface VIII—to keep out such an emperor as Dante imagined than the Ghibelline nobles and potentates.

Dante's political views were a dream, though a dream based on what had been, and an anticipation of what was, in part at least, to come. It was a dream in the Middle Ages, in divided and republican Italy, the Italy of cities—of a real and national government based on justice and law. It was the dream of a real *state*. He imagined that the Roman empire had been one great state; he persuaded himself that Christendom might be such; he was wrong in both instances; but in this case, as in so many others, he had already caught the spirit and ideas of a far distant future; and the political organization of modern times, so familiar to us that we cease to think of its exceeding wonder, is the practical confirmation, though in a form very different from what he imagined, of the depth and farsightedness of those expectations which are in outward form so chimerical—'*i miei non falsi errori*'.

He had studied the 'infinite disorders of the world' in one of their most unrestrained scenes, the streets of an Italian republic. Law was power-

less, good men were powerless, good intentions came to naught; neither social habits nor public power could resist, when selfishness chose to have its way. The Church was indeed still the salt of the nations; but it had once dared, and achieved more; it had once been the only power which ruled them. And this it could do no longer. If strength and energy had been enough to make the Church's influence felt on government, there was a Pope who could have done it—a man who was undoubtedly the most wondered at and admired of his age, whom friend or foe never characterized, without adding the invariable epithet of his greatness of soul, the '*magnanimus peccator*'[1], whose Roman grandeur in meeting his unworthy fate fascinated into momentary sympathy even Dante[2]. But among the things which Boniface VIII could not do, even if he cared about it, was the maintaining peace and law in Italian towns. And, while this great political power was failing, its correlative and antagonist was paralysed also. 'Since the death of Frederic II', says Dante's contemporary, 'the fame and recollections of the empire were well nigh extinguished'[3]. Italy was left without government—'come nave senza nocchiero in gran tempesta'—to the mercies of her tyrants:

[1] Benvenuto da Imola.

[2] Veggio in Alagna entrar lo fiordaliso
E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto;
Veggiolo un' altra volta esser deriso;
Veggio rinnovellar l'aceto e 'l fele,
E tra vivi ladroni essere anciso.—*Purg.*, 20.

G. Vill., 8, 63. 'Come magnanimo e valente, disse, *Dacchè per tradimento, come Gesù Cristo voglio esser preso e mi conviene morire, almeno voglio morire come Papa;* e di presente si fece parare dell' ammanto di S. Piero, e colla corona di Costantino in Capo, e colle chiavi e croce in mano, e in su la sedia papale si pose a sedere, e giunto a lui Sciarra e gli altri suoi nimici, con villane parole lo scherniro.'

[3] Dino Compagni, p. 135.

> Che le terre d'Italia tutte piene
> Son di tiranni, e un Marcel diventa
> Ogni villan, che parteggiando viene.—*Purg.*, 6.

In this scene of violence and disorder, with the Papacy gone astray, the empire debased and impotent, the religious orders corrupted, power meaning lawlessness, the well-disposed become weak and cowardly, religion neither guide nor check to society, but only the consolation of its victims, Dante was bold and hopeful enough to believe in the Divine appointment, and the possibility, of law and government—of a state. In his philosophy the institutions which provide for man's peace and liberty in this life are part of God's great order for raising men to perfection; not indispensable, yet ordinary parts, having their important place, though but for the present time, and, though imperfect, real instruments of His moral government. He could not believe it to be the intention of Providence that, on the introduction of higher hopes and the foundation of a higher society, civil society should collapse and be left to ruin, as henceforth useless or prejudicial in man's trial and training; that the significant intimations of nature, that law and its results, justice, peace, and stability, ought to be and might be realized among men, had lost their meaning and faded away before the announcement of a kingdom not of this world. And if the perfection of civil society had not been superseded by the Church, it had become clear, if events were to be read as signs, that she was not intended to supply its political offices and functions. She had taught, elevated, solaced, blessed, not only individual souls but society; she had for a time even governed it; but though her other powers remained, she could govern it no longer. Failure had made it certain that, in his strong and quaint language, '*Virtus authorizandi regnum nostræ mortalitatis est contra naturam ecclesiæ; ergo non est de numero virtutum suarum.*' Another and distinct organiza-

tion was required for this, unless the temporal order was no longer worthy the attention of Christians.

This is the idea of the *De Monarchia*[1]; and, though it holds but a place in the great scheme of the *Commedia*, it is prominent there also—an idea seen but in a fantastic shape, encumbered and confused with most grotesque imagery, but the real idea of polity and law, which the experience of modern Europe has attained to.

He found in clear outline in the Greek philosophy the theory of merely human society; and, raising its end and purpose, '*finem totius humanæ civilitatis*', to a height and dignity which Heathens could not forecast, he adopted it in its more abstract and ideal form. He imagined a single authority, unselfish, inflexible, irresistible, which could make all smaller tyrannies to cease, and enable every man to live in peace and liberty so that he lived in justice. It is simply what each separate state of Christendom has by this time more or less perfectly achieved. The theorizer of the Middle Ages could conceive of its accomplishment only in one form, as grand as it was impossible—a universal monarchy.

But he did not start from an abstraction. He believed that history attested the existence of such a monarchy. The prestige of the Roman empire was then strong. Europe still lingers on the idea, and cannot even yet bring itself to give up its part in that greatest monument of human power. But in the Middle Ages the Empire was still believed to exist. It was the last greatness which had been seen in the world, and the world would not believe that it was over. Above all, in Italy a continuity of lineage, of language, of local names, and in part of civilization and law, forbad the thought that the great Roman people had ceased to be. Florentines and Venetians boasted that they were Romans; the legends which the Florentine ladies told to their maidens at the loom were tales of their mother city,

[1] *De Monarch.*, lib. iii, p. 188, Ed. Fraticelli.

Rome. The Roman element, little understood but profoundly reverenced and dearly cherished, was dominant; the conductor of civilization, and enfolding the inheritance of all the wisdom, experience, feeling, art, of the past, it elevated even while it overawed, oppressed, and enslaved. A deep belief in Providence added to the intrinsic grandeur of the empire a sacred character. The flight of the eagle has been often told and often sung; but neither in Livy or Virgil, Gibbon or Bossuet, with intenser sympathy or more kindred power than in those rushing and unflagging verses in which the middle-age poet hears the imperial legislator relate the fated course of the 'sacred sign', from the day when Pallas died for it till it accomplished the vengeance of heaven in Judæa, and afterwards, undei Charlemagne, smote down the enemies of the Church [1].

The following passage, from the *De Monarchia*, will show the poet's view of the Roman empire, and its office in the world:

To the reasons above alleged a memorable experience brings confirmation: I mean that state of mankind which the Son of God, when He would for man's salvation take man upon Him, either waited for or ordered when so He willed. For if from the fall of our first parents, which was the starting point of all our wanderings, we retrace the various dispositions of men and their times, we shall not find at any time except under the divine monarch Augustus, when a perfect monarchy existed, that the world was everywhere quiet. And that then mankind was happy in the tranquillity of universal peace, this all writers of history, this famous poets, this even the Scribe of the meekness of Christ has deigned to attest. And, lastly, Paul has called that most blessed condition the fulness of time. Truly time, and the things of time, were full, for no mystery of our felicity then lacked its minister. But how the world has gone on from the time when that seamless robe was first torn by the claws of covetousness, we may read, and would that we might not also see. O race of men!—by how great storms and losses, by how great shipwrecks hast thou of

[1] *Paradiso*, c. 6.

necessity been vexed, since, transformed into a beast of many heads, thou hast been struggling different ways, sick in under, standing, equally sick in heart. The higher intellect, with its invincible reasons, thou reckest not of; nor of the inferoir-with its eye of experience; nor of affection, with the sweetness of divine suasion, when the trumpet of the Holy Ghost sounds to thee—'Behold, how good is it, and how pleasant, brethren, to dwell together in unity.'—*De Monarch.*, lib. i, p. 54.

Yet this great Roman Empire existed still unimpaired in name—not unimposing even in what really remained of it. Dante, to supply a want, turned it into a theory, a theory easy to smile at now, but which contained and was a beginning of unknown or unheeded truth. What he yearns after is the predominance of the principle of justice in civil society. That, if it is still imperfect, is no longer a dream in our day; but experience had never realized it to him, and he takes refuge in tentative and groping theory. The divinations of the greatest men have been vague and strange, and none have been stranger than those of the author of the *De Monarchia.* The second book, in which he establishes the title of the Roman people to Universal Empire, is as startling a piece of mediæval argument as it would be easy to find.

As, when we cannot attain to look upon a cause, we commonly wonder at a new effect, so, when we know the cause, we look down with a certain derision on those who remain in wonder. And I indeed wondered once how the Roman people had, without any resistance, been set over the world; and, looking at it superficially, I thought that they had obtained this by no right but by mere force of arms. But, when I fixed deeply the eyes of my mind on it, and by most effectual signs knew that Divine Providence had wrought this, wonder departed, and a certain scornful contempt came in its stead when I perceived the nations raging against the pre-eminence of the Roman people; when I see the people imagining a vain thing, as I once used to do; when, moreover, I grieve over kings and princes agreeing in this only, to be against their Lord and his anointed Roman Emperor. Wherefore in derision, not without a certain grief, I can cry out, for that glorious people and for Cæsar, with him who cried in

behalf of the Prince of Heaven: 'Why did the nations rage, and the people imagine vain things; the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were joined in one against the Lord, and his anointed.' But because natural love suffers not derision to be of long duration, but, like the summer sun, which, scattering the morning mists, irradiates the east with light, so prefers to pour forth the light of correction, to break the bonds of the ignorance of such kings and rulers, to show that the human race is free from *their* yoke, therefore I will exhort myself, in company with the most holy Prophet, taking up his following words: 'Let us break their bonds, and cast away from us their yoke.'—*De Monarch.*, lib. ii, p. 58.

And, to prove this pre-eminence of right in the Roman people and their heirs, the Emperors of Christendom, he appeals not merely to the course of Providence, to their high and noble ancestry, to the blessings of their just and considerate laws, to their unselfish guardianship of the world—'*Romanum imperium de fonte nascitur pietatis*'—not merely to their noble examples of private virtue, self-devotion, and public spirit—'those most sacred victims of the Decian house who laid down their lives for the public weal, as Livy—not as *they* deserved, but as *he* was able—tells to their glory; and that unspeakable sacrifice of freedom's sternest guardians, the Catos'; not merely to the 'judgment of God' in that great duel and wager of battle for empire in which heaven declared against all other champions and 'co-athletes'—Alexander, Pyrrhus, Hannibal, and by all the formalities of judicial combat awarded the great prize to those who fought not for love or hatred but justice—'*Quis igitur nunc adeo obtusæ mentis est, qui non videat, sub jure duelli gloriosum populum coronam totius orbis esse lucratum?*'—not merely to arguments derived 'from the principles of the Christian faith'—but to *miracles.* 'The Roman Empire', he says, 'was, in order to its perfections, aided by the help of miracles; therefore it was willed by God; and, by consequence, both was, and is, of right.' And these miracles, 'proved by the testimony of illustrious authorities',

are the prodigies of Livy—the ancile of Numa, the geese of the Capitol, the escape of Clelia, the hail-storm which checked Hannibal[1].

The intellectual phenomenon is a strange one. It would be less strange if Dante were arguing in the schools or pleading for a party. But even Henry of Luxemburg cared little for such a throne as the poet wanted him to fill, much less Can Grande and the Visconti. The idea, the theory, and the argument, are of the writer's own solitary meditation. We may wonder. But there are few things more strange than the history of argument. How often has a cause or an idea turned out in the eyes of posterity so much better than its arguments. How often have we seen argument getting as it were into a groove, and unable to extricate itself, so as to do itself justice. The everyday cases of private experience, of men defending right conclusions on wrong or conventional grounds, or in a confused form, engaged with conclusions of a like yet different nature; of arguments theories, solutions, which once satisfied, satisfying us no longer on a question about which we hold the same belief; of one party unable to comprehend the arguments of another; of one section of the same side smiling at the defence of their common cause by another—are all reproduced on a grander scale in the history of society. There, too, one age cannot comprehend another; there, too, it takes time to disentangle, subordinate, eliminate. Truth of this sort is not the elaboration of one keen or strong mind but of the secret experience of many; '*nihil sine ætate est, omnia tempus expectant.*' But a counterpart to the *De Monarchia* is not wanting in our own day; theory has not ceased to be mighty. In warmth and earnestness, in sense of historic grandeur, in its support of a great cause and a great idea, not less than in the thought of its motto: Εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, De Maistre's volume *Du Pape* recalls the antagonist

[1] *De Monarch.*, lib. ii, p. 62, 66, 78, 82, 84, 108–14, 116, 72–6.

De Monarchia; but it recalls it not less in its bold dealing with facts and its bold assumption of principles, though the knowledge and debates of five more busy centuries, and the experience of modern courts and revolutions, might have guarded the Piedmontese nobleman from the mistakes of the old Florentine.

But the idea of the *De Monarchia* is no key to the *Commedia.* The direct and primary purpose of the *Commedia* is surely its obvious one. It is to stamp a deep impression on the mind of the issues of good and ill doing here—of the real worlds of pain and joy. To do this forcibly, it is done in detail—of course it can only be done in figure. Punishment, purification, or the fulness of consolation, are, as he would think, at this very moment the lot of all the numberless spirits who have ever lived here, spirits still living and sentient as himself: parallel with our life, they too are suffering or are at rest. Without pause or interval, in all its parts simultaneously, this awful scene is going on—the judgments of God are being fulfilled, could we but see it. It exists, it might be seen, at each instant of time by a soul whose eyes were opened, which was carried through it. And this he imagines. It had been imagined before; it is the working out which is peculiar to him. It is not a barren vision. His subject is, besides the eternal world, the soul which contemplates it; by sight, according to his figures—in reality, by faith. As he is led on from woe to deeper woe, then through the tempered chastisements and resignation of Purgatory to the beatific vision, he is tracing the course of the soul on earth, realizing sin and weaning itself from it—of its purification, and preparation for its high lot, by converse with the good and wise, by the remedies of grace, by efforts of will and love, perhaps by the dominant guidance of some single pure and holy influence, whether of person, or institution, or thought. Nor will we say but that beyond this

earthly probation he is not also striving to grasp and imagine to himself something of that awful process and training by which, whether in or out of the flesh, the spirit is made fit to meet its Maker, its Judge, and its Chief Good.

Thus it seems that even in its main design the poem has more than one aspect; it is a picture, a figure, partially a history, perhaps an anticipation. And this is confirmed by what the poet has himself distinctly stated of his ideas of poetic composition. His view is expressed generally in his philosophical treatise, the *Convito;* but it is applied directly to the *Commedia* in a letter which, if in its present form of doubtful authenticity, without any question represents his sentiments, and the substance of which is incorporated in one of the earliest writings on the poem, Boccaccio's commentary. The following is his account of the subject of the poem :

For the evidence of what is to be said, it is to be noted that this work is not of one single meaning only, but may be said to have many meanings ('*polysensuum*'). For the first meaning is that of the letter—another is that of things signified by the letter; the first of these is called the literal sense, the second the allegorical or moral. This mode of treating a subject may for clearness sake be considered in those verses of the Psalm, '*In exitu Israel*'. 'When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from the strange people, Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.' For if we look at the *letter* only, there is here signified the going out of the children of Israel in the time of Moses; if at the *allegory*, there is signified our redemption through Christ; if at the *moral* sense, there is signified to us the conversion of the soul from the mourning and misery of sin to the state of grace; if at the *anagogic* sense [1], there is signified the passing out of the holy soul from the bondage of this corruption, to the liberty of everlasting glory. And these mystical meanings, though called by different names, may all be called *allegorical* as distinguished from the literal or historical sense. . . This being

[1] *Litera* gesta refert, quid credas *allegoria*,
Moralis quid agas, quid speres *anagogia*.
De Witte's note from Buti.

considered, it is plain that there ought to be a twofold subject, concerning which the two corresponding meanings may proceed. Therefore we must consider first concerning the subject of this work as it is to be understood literally, then as it is to be considered allegorically. The subject then of the whole work, taken literally only, is the state of souls after death considered in itself. For about this, and on this, the whole work turns. But if the work be taken allegorically, its subject is man, as, by his freedom of choice deserving well or ill, he is subject to the justice which rewards and punishes.[1]

The passage in the *Convito* is to the same effect; but his remarks on the *moral* and *anagogic* meaning may be quoted:

The third sense is called *moral;* this it is which readers ought to go on noting carefully in writings, for their own profit and that of their disciples: as in the Gospel it may be noted, when Christ went up to the mountain to be transfigured, that of the twelve Apostles he took with him only three; in which morally we may understand that in the most secret things we ought to have but few companions. The fourth sort of meaning is called *anagogic*, that is, above our sense, and this is when we spiritually interpret a passage which, even in its literal meaning, by means of the things signified expresses the heavenly things of everlasting glory; as may be seen in that song of the Prophet, which says that in the coming out of the people of Israel from Egypt Judah was made holy and free; which, although it is manifestly true according to the letter, is not less true as spiritually understood, that is, that when the soul comes out of sin, it is made holy and free, in its own power.[2]

With this passage before us, there can be no doubt of the meaning, however veiled, of those beautiful lines, already referred to, in which Virgil, after having conducted the poet up the steeps of Purgatory, where his sins have been one by one cancelled by the ministering angels, finally takes leave of him, and bids him wait for Beatrice, on the skirts of the earthly Paradise:

Come la scala tutta sotto noi
Fu corsa e fummo in su 'l grado superno,
In me ficcò Virgilio gli occhi suoi,

[1] *Ep. ad Kan Grand.* § 6, 7.

[2] *Convito*, Tr. 2, c. 1.

E disse: 'Il temporal fuoco, e l' eterno
Veduto hai, figlio, e se' venuto in parte
Ov' io per me più oltre non discerno.
Tratto t' ho qui con ingegno e con arte:
Lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce;
Fuor se' dell' erte vie, fuor se' dell' arte.
Vedi il sole che 'n fronte ti riluce:
Vedi l' erbetta, i fiori, e gli arboscelli
Che quella terra sol da se produce.
Mentre che vegnon lieti gli occhi belli
Che lagrimando a te venir mi fenno,
Seder ti puoi e puoi andar tra elli.
Non aspettar mio dir più nè mio cenno:
Libero, dritto, sano è tuo arbitrio,
E fallo fora non fare a suo senno:
Perch' io te sopra te corono e mitrio.'[1]

The general meaning of the *Commedia* is clear enough. But it certainly does appear to refuse to be fitted into a connected formal scheme of interpretation. It is not a homogeneous, consistent, allegory, like *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Faery Queene.* The allegory continually breaks off, shifts

[1] When we had run
O'er all the ladder to its topmost round,
As there we stood, on me the Mantuan fixed
His eyes, and thus he spake: 'Both fires, my son,
The temporal and the eternal, thou hast seen:
And art arrived, where of itself my ken
No further reaches. I, with skill and art,
Thus far have drawn thee. Now thy pleasure take
For guide. Thou hast o'ercome the steeper way,
O'ercome the straiter. Lo!—the sun, that darts
His beam upon thy forehead: lo!—the herb,
The arborets and flowers, which of itself
This land pours forth profuse. Till those bright eyes
With gladness come, which, weeping, made me haste
To succour thee, thou mayest or seat thee down,
Or wander where thou wilt. Expect no more
Sanction of warning voice or sign from me,
Free of thine own arbitrement to choose,
Discreet, judicious. To distrust thy sense
Were henceforth error. I invest thee then
With crown and mitre, sovereign o'er thyself.'
Purg., c. 27 (Cary).

its ground, gives place to other elements, or mingles with them—like a stream which suddenly sinks into the earth, and, after passing under plains and mountains, reappears in a distant point and in different scenery. We can, indeed, imagine its strange author commenting on it, and finding or marking out its prosaic substratum, with the coldblooded precision and scholastic distinctions of the *Convito*. However, he has not done so. And of the many enigmas which present themselves, either in its structure or separate parts, the key seems hopelessly lost. The early commentators are very ingenious but very unsatisfactory; they see where we can see, but beyond that they are as full of uncertainty as ourselves. It is in character with that solitary and haughty spirit, while touching universal sympathies, appalling and charming all hearts, to have delighted in his own dark sayings, which had meaning only to himself. It is true that, whether in irony or from that quaint studious care for the appearance of literal truth which makes him apologize for the wonders which he relates, and confirm them by an oath, 'on the words of his poem '[1], he provokes and challenges us; bids us admire 'doctrine hidden under strange verses '[2]; bids us strain our eyes, for the veil is thin:

> Aguzza, qui, lettor, ben l' occhi al vero:
> Che il velo è ora ben tanto sottile,
> Certo, che il trapassar dentro è leggiero.—*Purg.*, c. 8

But eyes are still strained in conjecture and doubt.

Yet the most certain and detailed commentary, one which assigned the exact reason for every image or allegory and its place and connexion in a general

[1] Sempre a quel ver, ch' ha faccia di menzogna,
De' l' uom chiuder le labbra, quanto puote,
Però che senza colpa fa vergogna.
Ma qui tacer nol posso; e per le note
Di questa Commedia, lettor, ti giuro
S' elle non sien di lunga grazia vote, &c.—*Inf.*, 16.

[2] *Inf.*, 9.

scheme, would add but little to the charm or the use of the poem. It is not so obscure but that every man's experience who has thought over and felt the mystery of our present life may supply the commentary—the more ample, the wider and more various has been his experience, the deeper and keener his feeling. Details and links of connexion may be matter of controversy. Whether the three beasts of the forest mean definitely the vices of the time, or of Florence specially, or of the poet himself—'the wickedness of his heels, compassing him round about'—may still exercise critics and antiquaries; but that they carry with them distinct and special impressions of evil, and that they are the hindrances of man's salvation, is not doubtful. And our knowledge of the key of the allegory, where we possess it, contributes but little to the effect. We may infer from the *Convito*[1] that the eyes of Beatrice stand definitely for the *demonstrations*, and her smiles for the *persuasions* of wisdom; but the poetry of the *Paradiso* is not about demonstrations and persuasions, but about looks and smiles; and the ineffable and holy calm—'*serenitatis et æternitatis afflatus*'—which pervades it, comes from the sacred truths and holy persons and that deep spirit of high-raised yet composed devotion which it requires no interpreter to show us.

Figure and symbol, then, are doubtless the law of composition in the *Commedia;* but this law discloses itself very variously and with different degrees of strictness. In its primary and most general form, it is palpable, consistent, pervading. There can be no doubt that the poem is meant to be understood figuratively; no doubt of what in general it is meant to shadow forth; no doubt as to the general meaning of its parts, their connection with each other. But in its secondary and subordinate applications, the law works, to our eye at least, irregularly, unequally, and fitfully. There

[1] *Convito*, Tr. 3, c. 15.

can be no question that Virgil, the poet's guide, represents the purely human element in the training of the soul and of society as Beatrice does the divine. But neither represent the whole; he does not sum up all appliances of wisdom in Virgil, nor all teachings and influences of grace in Beatrice: these have their separate figures. And both represent successively several distinct forms of their general antitypes. They have various degrees of abstractness, and narrow down, according to that order of things to which they refer and correspond, into the special and the personal. In the general economy of the poem, Virgil stands for human wisdom in its widest sense; but he also stands for it in its various shapes, in the different parts. He is the type of human philosophy and science[1]. He is, again, more definitely that spirit of imagination and poetry which opens men's eyes to the glories of the visible and the truth of the invisible; and to Italians he is a definite embodiment of it, their own great poet, '*vates, poeta noster*[2]'. In the Christian order he is human wisdom, dimly mindful of its heavenly origin, presaging dimly its return to God, sheltering in heathen times that 'vague and unconnected family of religious truths, originally from God, but sojourning without the sanction of miracle or visible home, as pilgrims up and down the world'.[3] In the political order he is the guide of lawgivers, wisdom fashioning the impulses and instincts of men into the harmony of society, contriving stability and peace, guarding justice, fit part for the poet to fill, who had sung the origin of Rome and the justice and peace of Augustus. In the order of individual life and the progress of the individual soul he is the human conscience witnessing to duty, its discipline and its hopes, and with yet

[1] 'O tu ch' onori ogni scienza ed arte.'—*Inf.*, 4. 'Quel savio gentil che tutto seppe.'—*Inf.*, 7. 'Il mar di tutto 'l senno.'—*Inf.*, 8.

[2] *De Monarch.*

[3] Newman's *Arians.*

more certain and fearful presage, to its vindication; the human conscience seeing and acknowledging the law, but unable to confer power to fulfil it—wakened by grace from among the dead, leading the living man up to it, and waiting for its light and strength. But he is more than a figure. To the poet himself, who blends with his high argument his own life, Virgil had been the utmost that mind can be to mind—teacher, quickener and revealer of power, source of thought, exemplar and model, never disappointing, never attained to, observed with 'long study and great love':

Tu duca, tu signor, e tu maestro.—*Inf.*, 2

And towards this great master the poet's whole soul is poured forth in reverence and affection. To Dante he is no figure, but a person—with feelings and weaknesses—overcome by the vexation, kindling into the wrath, carried away by the tenderness, of the moment. He reads his scholar's heart, takes him by the hand in danger, carries him in his arms and in his bosom, 'like a son more than a companion', rebukes his unworthy curiosity, kisses him when he shows a noble spirit, asks pardon for his own mistakes. Never were the kind yet severe ways of a master, or the disciple's diffidence and open-heartedness, drawn with greater force or less effort; and he seems to have been reflecting on his own affection to Virgil when he makes Statius forget that they were both but shades:

Or puoi la quantitate
Comprender dell' amor ch' a te mi scalda,
Quando *dismento la nostra vanitate*
Trattando l' ombre come cosa salda.—*Purg.*, 21

And so with the poet's second guide. The great idea which Beatrice figures, though always present, is seldom rendered artificially prominent, and is often entirely hidden beneath the rush of real recollections and the creations of dramatic power.

Abstractions venture and trust themselves among realities, and for the time are forgotten. A name, a real person, a historic passage, a lament or denunciation, a tragedy of actual life, a legend of classic times, the fortunes of friends—the story of Francesca or Ugolino, the fate of Buonconte's corpse, the apology of Pier delle Vigne, the epitaph of Madonna Pia, Ulysses' western voyage, the march of Roman history—appear and absorb for themselves all interest; or else it is a philosophical speculation, or a theory of morality, or a case of conscience—not indeed alien from the main subject, yet independent of the allegory, and not translatable into any new meaning—standing on their own ground, worked out each according to its own law; but they do not disturb the main course of the poet's thought, who grasps and paints each detail of human life in its own peculiarity while he sees in each a significance and interest beyond itself. He does not stop in each case to tell us so, but he makes it felt. The tale ends, the individual disappears, and the great allegory resumes its course. It is like one of those great musical compositions which alone seem capable of adequately expressing, in a limited time, a course of unfolding and change, in an idea, a career, a life, a society—where one great thought predominates, recurs, gives colour and meaning, and forms the unity of the whole, yet passes through many shades and transitions; is at one time definite, at another suggestive and mysterious; incorporates and gives free place and play to airs and melodies even of an alien cast; strikes off abruptly from its expected road, but without ever losing itself, without breaking its true continuity, or failing of its completeness.

This then seems to us the end and purpose of the *Commedia*—to produce on the mind a sense of the judgments of God analogous to that produced by Scripture itself. They are presented to us in the Bible in shapes which address themselves primarily

to the heart and conscience, and seek not carefully to explain themselves. They are likened to the 'great deep', to the 'strong mountains'—vast and awful, but abrupt and incomplete, as the huge, broken, rugged piles and chains of mountains. And we see them through cloud and mist, in shapes only approximating to the true ones. Still they impress us deeply and truly, often the more deeply because unconsciously. A character, an event, a word, isolated and unexplained, stamps its meaning ineffaceably, though ever a matter of question and wonder; it may be dark to the intellect, yet the conscience understands it, often but too well. In such suggestive ways is the Divine government for the most part put before us in the Bible—ways which do not satisfy the understanding, but which fill us with a sense of reality. And it seems to have been by meditating on them, which he certainly did, much and thoughtfully, and on the infinite variety of similar ways in which the strongest impressions are conveyed to us in ordinary life, by means short of clear and distinct explanation, by looks, by images, by sounds, by motions, by remote allusion and broken words, that Dante was led to choose so new and remarkable a mode of conveying to his countrymen his thoughts and feelings and presentiments about the mystery of God's counsel. The Bible teaches us by means of real history, traced so far as is necessary along its real course. The poet expresses his view of the world also in real history, but carried on into figure.

The poetry with which the Christian Church had been instinct from the beginning converges and is gathered up in the *Commedia*. The faith had early shown its poetical aspect. It is superfluous to dwell on this, for it is the charge against ancient teaching that it was too large and imaginative. It soon began to try rude essays in sculpture and mosaic; expressed its feeling of nature in verse and prose, rudely also, but often with originality

and force; and opened a new vein of poetry in the thoughts, hopes, and aspirations of regenerate man. Modern poetry must go back for many of its deepest and most powerful sources to the writings of the Fathers and their followers of the School. The Church further had a poetry of its own, besides the poetry of literature; it had the poetry of devotion —the Psalter chanted daily, in a new language and a new meaning, and that wonderful body of hymns to which age after age had contributed its offering, from the Ambrosian hymns to the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* of a king of France, the *Pange Lingua* of Thomas Aquinas, the *Dies Iræ* and *Stabat Mater* of the two Franciscan brethren. The elements and fragments of poetry were everywhere in the Church —in her ideas of life, in her rules and institutions for passing through it, in her preparation for death, in her offices, ceremonial, celebrations, usages, her consecration of domestic, literary, commercial, civic, military, political life, the meanings and ends she had given them, the religious seriousness with which the forms of each were dignified—in her doctrine, and her dogmatic system—her dependence on the unseen world—her Bible. And from each and all of these, and from that public feeling which, if it expressed itself but abruptly and incoherently, was quite alive to the poetry which surrounded it, the poet received due impressions of greatness and beauty, of joy and dread; then the poetry of Christian religion and Christian temper, hitherto dispersed or manifested in act only, found its full and distinct utterance, not unworthy to rank in grandeur, in music, in sustained strength, with the last noble voices from expiring Heathenism.

But a long interval had passed since then. The *Commedia* first disclosed to Christian and modern Europe that it was to have a literature of its own, great and admirable, though in its own language and embodying its own ideas. 'It was as if at some of the ancient games a stranger had appeared

upon the plain, and thrown his quoit among the marks of former casts, which tradition had ascribed to the demi-gods.'[1] We are so accustomed to the excellent and varied literature of modern times, so original, so perfect in form and rich in thought, so expressive of all our sentiments, meeting so completely our wants, fulfilling our ideas, that we can scarcely imagine the time when this condition was new—when society was beholden to a foreign language for the exponents of its highest thoughts and feelings. But so it was when Dante wrote. The great poets, historians, philosophers of his day, the last great works of intellect, belonged to old Rome and the Latin language. So wonderful and prolonged was the fascination of Rome. Men still lived under its influence, believed that the Latin language was the perfect and permanent instrument of thought in its highest forms, the only expression of refinement and civilization, and had not conceived the hope that their own dialects could ever rise to such heights of dignity and power. Latin, which had enchased and preserved such precious remains of ancient wisdom, was now shackling the living mind in its efforts. Men imagined that they were still using it naturally on all high themes and solemn business; but, though they used it with facility, it was no longer natural: it had lost the elasticity of life, and had become in their hands a stiffened and distorted, though still powerful, instrument. The very use of the word '*latino*' in the writers of this period to express what is clear and philosophical in language[2], while it shows their deep reverence for it, shows how Latin civilization was no longer their own, how it had insensibly become an external and foreign element. But they found it very hard to resign their claim to a share in its glories; with nothing of their own to match

[1] Hallam's *Middle Ages*, c. ix, vol. iii, p. 563.

[2] *Parad.*, 3, 12, 17. *Convit.*, p. 108. 'A più *Latinamente* vedere la sentenza letterale.'

against it, they still delighted to speak of it as 'our language' or its writers as 'our poets', 'our historians'.[1]

The spell was indeed beginning to break. Guido Cavalcanti, Dante's strange, stern, speculative friend, who is one of the fathers of the Italian language, is characterized in the *Commedia*[2] by his scornful dislike of Latin, even in the mouth of Virgil. Yet Dante himself, the great assertor, by argument and example, of the powers of the Vulgar tongue, once dared not to think that it could be other to the Latin than as a subject to his sovereign. He was bolder when he wrote *De Vulgari Eloquio:* but in the earlier *Convito*, while pleading earnestly for the beauty of the Italian, he yields with reverence the first place to the Latin—for nobleness because the Latin is permanent and the Vulgar subject to fluctuation and corruption, for power because the Latin can express conceptions to which the Vulgar is unequal, for beauty because the structure of the Latin is a masterly arrangement of scientific art and the beauty of the Vulgar depends on mere use[3]. The very title of his poem, the *Commedia*, contains in it a homage to the lofty claims of the Latin. It is called a Comedy and not Tragedy, he says, after a marvellous account of the essence and etymology of the two, first, because it begins sadly and ends joyfully, and next, because of its language, that humble speech of ordinary life 'in which even women converse'.[4]

1 *Vid.* the *De Monarchia*.

2 *Inf.*, 10, and compare the *Vit. N.*, p. 334, ed. Fraticelli.

3 *Convito*, i, 5.

4 *Ep. ad Kan Grand.* § 9—a curious specimen of the learning of the time: 'Sciendum est quod *Comœdia* dicitur a κωμη, *villa*, et ωδη, quod est *cantus*, unde Comœdia quasi *villanus cantus*. Et est Comœdia *genus quoddam poeticæ narrationis* ab omnibus aliis differens. Differt ergo a Tragœdia in materia per hoc, quod Tragœdia in principio est admirabilis et quieta, in fine fœtida et horribilis; et dicitur propter hoc a τραγος, i. e. *hircus*, et ωδη, quasi *cantus hircinus*, i. e. fœtidus ad modum hirci, ut

He honoured the Latin, but his love was for the Italian. He was its champion and indignant defender against the depreciation of ignorance and fashion. Confident of its power and jealous of its beauty, he pours forth his fierce scorn on the blind stupidity, the affectation, the vain-glory, the envy, and above all, the cowardice of Italians who held lightly their mother tongue. 'Many', he says, after enumerating the other offenders, 'from this pusillanimity and cowardice disparage their own language and exalt that of others, and of this sort are those hateful dastards of Italy—*abbominevoli cattivi d' Italia*, who think vilely of that precious language, which, if it is vile in anything, is vile only so far as it sounds in the prostituted mouth of these adulterers.'[1] He noted and compared its various dialects; he asserted its capabilities not only in verse but in expressive, flexible, and majestic prose. And to the deliberate admiration of the critic and

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patet per Senecam in suis tragœdiis. Comœdia vero inchoat asperitatem alicujus rei, sed ejus materia prospere terminatur, ut patet per Terentium in suis Comœdiis. . . Similiter differunt in modo loquendi; elate et sublime Tragœdia, Comœdia vero remisse et humiliter sicut vult Horat. in Poët. . . Et per hoc patet, quod Comœdia dicitur præsens opus. Nam si ad materiam respiciamus, a principio horribilis et fœtida est, quia Infernus: in fine prospera, desiderabilis et grata, quia Paradisus. Si ad modum loquendi, remissus est modus et humilis, quia locutio Vulgaris, in qua et mulierculæ communicant. Et sic patet quia Comœdia dicitur.' Cf. *De Vulg. Eloq.*, 2, 4, *Parad.* 30. He calls the *Æneid* '*l' alta Tragedia*' (*Inf.*, 20, 113). Compare also Boccaccio's explanation of his mother's dream of the *peacock*. Dante, he says, is like the Peacock, among other reasons, 'because the peacock has coarse feet, and a quiet gait'; and 'the vulgar language, on which the *Commedia* supports itself, is coarse in comparison with the high and masterly literary style which every other poet uses, though it be more beautiful than others, being in conformity with modern minds. The quiet gait signifies the humility of the style, which is necessarily required in "Commedia", as those know who understand what is meant by "Commedia".'

[1] *Convito*, i, 11.

the man were added the homely but dear associations which no language can share with that of early days. Italian had been the language of his parents: '*Questo mio Volgare fu il congiugnitore delli miei generanti, che con esso parlavano*'; and, further, it was this modern language, '*questo mio Volgare*', which opened to him the way of knowledge, which had introduced him to Latin and the sciences which it contained. It was his benefactor and guide; he personifies it—and his boyish friendship had grown stronger and more intimate by mutual good offices. 'There has also been between us the goodwill of intercourse; for from the beginning of my life I have had with it kindness and conversation, and have used it, deliberating, interpreting, and questioning; so that, if friendship grows with use, it is evident how it must have grown in me.'[1]

From this language he exacted a hard trial—a work which should rank with the ancient works. None such had appeared; none had even advanced such a pretension. Not that it was a time dead to literature or literary ambition. Poets and historians had written, and were writing, in Italian. The same year of jubilee which fixed itself so deeply in Dante's mind, and became the epoch of his vision—the same scene of Roman greatness in its decay, which afterwards suggested to Gibbon the *Decline and Fall*, prompted in the father of Italian history the desire to follow in the steps of Sallust and Livy, and prepare the way for Machiavelli and Guicciardini, Davila and Fra Paolo[2]. Poetry had been

[1] *Convito*, i, 13.

[2] G. Villani was at Rome in the year of jubilee, 1300, and describes the great concourse and order of the pilgrims, whom he reckons at 200,000, in the course of the year. 'And I', he proceeds, 'finding myself in that blessed pilgrimage in the holy city of Rome, seeing the great and ancient things of the same, and reading the histories of the great deeds of the Romans, written by Virgil, and by Sallust, and Lucan, and Titus Livius, and Valerius, and Paulus Orosius, and other masters of histories, who wrote as well of the smaller matters

cultivated in the Roman languages of the West (in Aquitaine and Provence, especially) for more than two centuries; and lately, with spirit and success, in Italian. Names had become popular, reputations had risen and waned, verses circulated and were criticized, and even descended from the high and refined circles to the workshop. A story is told of Dante's indignation when he heard the canzoni which had charmed the Florentine ladies mangled by the rude enthusiasm of a blacksmith at his forge [1]. Literature was a growing fashion; but it was humble in its aspirations and efforts. Men wrote like children, surprised and pleased with their success; yet allowing themselves in mere amusement, because conscious of weakness which they could not cure.

Dante, by the *Divina Commedia*, was the restorer of seriousness in literature. He was so by the magnitude and pretensions of his work and by the earnestness of its spirit. He first broke through the prescription which had confined great works to the Latin, and the faithless prejudices which, in the

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as of the greater, concerning the exploits and deeds of the Romans; and further, of the strange things of the whole world, for memory and example's sake to those who should come after—I too, took their style and fashion, albeit that, as their scholar, I be not worthy to execute such a work. But, considering that our city of Florence, the daughter and creation of Rome, was in its rising and on the eve of achieving great things, as Rome was in its decline, it seemed to me convenient to bring into this volume and new chronicle all the deeds and beginnings of the city of Florence so far as I have been able to gather and recover them, and for the future to follow at large the doings of the Florentines, and the other notable things of the world briefly, as long as it may be God's pleasure; under which hope, rather by His grace than by my poor science, I entered on this enterprise; and so, in the year 1300, being returned from Rome, I began to compile this book, in reverence towards God and S. John, and commendation of our city of Florence.'—G. Vill., viii, 36.

[1] Sacchetti, Nov. 114.

language of society, could see powers fitter for no higher task than that of expressing, in curiously diversified forms, its most ordinary feelings. But he did much more. Literature was going astray in its tone, while growing in importance; the *Commedia* checked it. The Provençal and Italian poetry was, with the exception of some pieces of political satire, almost exclusively amatory, in the most fantastic and affected fashion. In expression, it had not even the merit of being natural; in purpose it was trifling; in the spirit which it encouraged, it was something worse. Doubtless it brought a degree of refinement with it, but it was refinement purchased at a high price, by intellectual distortion and moral insensibility. But this was not all. The brilliant age of Frederick II, for such it was, was deeply mined by religious unbelief. However strange this charge first sounds against the thirteenth century, no one can look at all closely into its history, at least in Italy, without seeing that the idea of infidelity—not heresy, but infidelity—was quite a familiar one; and that side by side with the theology of Aquinas and Bonaventura there was working among those who influenced fashion and opinion, among the great men, and the men to whom learning was a profession, a spirit of scepticism and irreligion almost monstrous for its time, which found its countenance in Frederick's refined and enlightened court. The genius of the great doctors might have kept in safety the Latin Schools, but not the free and home thoughts which found utterance in the language of the people, if the solemn beauty of the Italian *Commedia* had not seized on all minds. It would have been an evil thing for Italian, perhaps for European, literature if the siren tales of the *Decameron* had been the first to occupy the ear with the charms of a new language.

Dante has had hard measure, and from some who are most beholden to him. No one in his day served the Church more highly than he whose faith

and genius secured on her side the first great burst of imagination and feeling, the first perfect accents of modern speech. The first fruits of the new literature were consecrated, and offered up. There was no necessity, or even probability, in Italy in the 14th century that it should be so, as there might perhaps have been earlier. It was the poet's free act—free in one for whom nature and heathen learning had strong temptations—that religion was the lesson and influence of the great popular work of the time. That which he held up before men's awakened and captivated minds was the verity of God's moral government. To rouse them to a sense of the mystery of their state; to startle their common-place notions of sin into an imagination of its variety, its magnitude, and its infinite shapes and degrees; to open their eyes to the beauty of the Christian temper, both as suffering and as consummated; to teach them at once the faithfulness and awful freeness of God's grace; to help the dull and lagging soul to conceive the possibility, in its own case, of rising step by step in joy without an end, of a felicity not unimaginable by man, though of another order from the highest perfection of earth—this is the poet's end. Nor was it only vague religious feelings which he wished to excite. He brought within the circle of common thought, and translated into the language of the multitude, what the Schools had done to throw light on the deep questions of human existence, which all are fain to muse upon though none can solve. He who had opened so much of men's hearts to themselves opened to them also that secret sympathy which exists between them and the great mysteries of the Christian doctrine [1]. He did the work, in his day, of a great preacher. Yet he has been both claimed and condemned as a disturber of the Church's faith.

He certainly did not spare the Church's rulers. He thought that they were betraying the most

[1] *Vide* Ozanam.

sacred of all trusts; and, if history is at all to be relied on, he had some grounds for thinking so. But it is confusing the feelings of the Middle Ages with our own to convert every fierce attack on the Popes into an anticipation of Luther. Strong language of this sort was far too commonplace to be so significant. No age is blind to practical abuses, or silent on them; and, when the Middle Ages complained, they did so with a full-voiced and clamorous rhetoric which greedily seized on every topic of vilification within its reach. It was far less singular and far less bold to criticize ecclesiastical authorities than is often supposed; but it by no means implied unsettled faith or a revolutionary design. In Dante's case, if words have any meaning—not words of deliberate qualification, but his unpremeditated and incidental expressions—his faith in the Divine mission and spiritual powers of the Popes was as strong as his abhorrence of their degeneracy and desire to see it corrected by a power which they would respect—that of the temporal sword. It would be to mistake altogether his character to imagine of him, either as a fault or as an excellence, that he was a doubter. It might as well be supposed of Aquinas.

No one ever acknowledged with greater seriousness, as a fact in his position in the world, the agreement in faith among those with whom he was born. No one ever inclined with more simplicity and reverence before that long communion and consent in feeling and purpose, the '*publicus* sensus' of the Christian Church. He did feel difficulties; but the excitement of lingering on them was not among his enjoyments. That was the lot of the heathen; Virgil, made wise by death, counsels him not to desire it:

> 'Matto è chi spera, che nostra ragione
> Possa trascorrer la 'nfinita via
> Che tiene una sustanzia in tre Persone.

State contenti, umana gente, al *quia;*
Che se potuto aveste veder tutto,
Mestier non era partorir Maria:
E disiar vedeste senza frutto
Tai, che sarebbe lor disio quetato,
Ch' eternamente è dato lor per lutto;
I' dico d' Aristotile e di Plato,
E di molti altri '—e qui chinò la fronte,
E più non disse, e rimase turbato.—*Purg.*, c. 3[1]

The Christian poet felt that it was greater to believe and to act. In the darkness of the world one bright light appeared, and he followed it. Providence had assigned him his portion of truth, his portion of daily bread; if to us it appears blended with human elements, it is perfectly clear that he was in no position to sift them. To choose was no trial of his. To examine and seek, where it was impossible to find, would have been folly. The authority from which he started had not yet been seriously questioned; there were no palpable signs of doubtfulness on the system which was to him the representative of God's will; and he sought for none. It came to him claiming his allegiance by custom, by universality, by its completeness as a whole, and satisfying his intellect and his sympathies in detail. And he gave his allegiance—reasonably, because there was nothing to hope for in doubting; wisely, because he gave it loyally and from his heart.

[1] 'Insensate he, who thinks with mortal ken
To pierce Infinitude, which doth enfold
Three Persons in one Substance. Seek not then,
O mortal race, for reasons—but believe,
And be contented; for had all been seen,
No need there was for Mary to conceive.
Men have ye known, who thus desired in vain;
And whose desires, that might at rest have been,
Now constitute a source of endless pain;
Plato, the Stagirite; and many more,
I here allude to '—then his head he bent,
Was silent, and a troubled aspect wore.—WRIGHT.

And he had his reward—the reward of him who throws himself with frankness and earnestness into a system, who is not afraid or suspicious of it, who is not unfaithful to it. He gained not merely power —he gained that freedom and largeness of mind which the suspicious or the unfaithful miss. His loyalty to the Church was no cramping or blinding service; it left to its full play that fresh and original mind, left it to range at will in all history and all nature for the traces of Eternal wisdom, left it to please itself with all beauty and pay its homage to all excellence. For upon all wisdom, beauty, and excellence, the Church had taught him to see, in various and duly distinguished degrees, the seal of the one Creator. She imparts to the poem, to its form and progressive development, her own solemnity, her awe, her calm, her serenity and joy; it follows her sacred seasons and hours; repeats her appointed words of benediction and praise; moulds itself on her belief, her expectations, and forecastings[1]. Her intimations, more or less distinct, dogma or tradition or vague hint; guide the poet's imagination through the land where all eyes are open. The journey begins under the Easter moon of the year of jubilee on the evening of Good Friday; the days of her mourning he spends in the regions of woe, where none dares to pronounce the name of the Redeemer, and he issues forth to 'behold again the stars', to learn how to die to sin and rise to righteousness, very early in the morning, as it begins to dawn on the day of the Resurrection. The whole arrangement of the *Purgatorio* is drawn from Church usages. It is a picture of men suffering in calm and holy hope the sharp discipline of repentance amid the prayers, the melodies, the consoling images and thoughts, the orderly ritual, the hours of devotion, the sacraments of the Church militant. When he ascends in his hardiest flight, and imagines the joys of the perfect

[1] See an article in *The British Critic*, no. 65, p. 120.

and the vision of God, his abundant fancy confines itself strictly to the limits sanctioned by her famous teachers, ventures into no new sphere, hazards no anticipations in which they have not preceded it, and is content with adding to the poetry which it elicits from their ideas, a beauty which it is able to conceive apart altogether from bodily form—the beauty, infinite in its variety, of the expression of the human eye and smile, the beauty of light, of sound, of motion. And when his song mounts to its last strain of triumph, and the poet's thought, imagination, and feeling of beauty, tasked to the utmost nor failing under the weight of glory which they have to express, breathe themselves forth in words higher than which no poetry has ever risen, and represent in images transcending sense and baffling it, yet missing not one of those deep and transporting sympathies which they were to touch, the sight, eye to eye, of the Creator by the creature, he beholds the gathering together in the presence of God of 'all that from our earth has to the skies returned' and of the countless orders of their thrones mirrored in His light:

Mira
Quanto è 'l convento delle bianche stole,

under a figure already taken into the ceremonial of the Church, the mystic Rose, whose expanding leaves image forth the joy of the heavenly Jerusalem [1].

[1] See the form of benediction of the 'Rosa d' oro'. He alludes to it in the *Convito*, iv, 29.

O isplendor di Dio, per cu' io vidi
L' alto trionfo del regno verace,
Dammi virtù a dir com' io lo vidi.
Lume è lassù, che visibile face
Lo creatore a quella creatura,
Che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace:
E si distende in circular figura
In tanto, che la sua circonferenza
Sarebbe al Sol troppo larga cintura.
* * *

But this universal reference to the religious ideas of the Church is so natural, so unaffected, that it leaves him at full liberty in other orders of thought. He can afford not to be conventional—he can afford to be comprehensive and genuine. It has been remarked how, in a poem where there would seem to be a fitting place for them, the ecclesiastical legends of the Middle Ages are almost entirely absent. The sainted spirits of the *Paradiso* are not exclusively or chiefly the Saints of popular devotion. After the Saints of the Bible, the holy women, the three great Apostles, the Virgin mother, they are either names personally dear to the poet himself, friends whom he had loved and teachers to whom he owed wisdom, or great men of masculine energy in thought or action, in their various lines 'compensations and antagonists of the world's evils'—Justinian and Constantine, and Charlemagne, the founders of the Orders, Augustine, Benedict, and

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E come clivo in acqua di suo imo
  Si specchia quasi per vedersi adorno,
  Quanto è nel verde e ne' fioretti opimo;
Sì soprastando al lume intorno intorno
  Vidi specchiarsi in più di mille soglie,
  Quanto di noi lassù fatto ha ritorno.
E se l' infimo grado in se raccoglie
  Sì grande lume, quant' è la larghezza
  Di questa rosa nell' estreme foglie?

* * *

Nel giallo della rosa sempiterna,
  Che si dilata, rigrada, e ridole
  Odor di lode al Sol, che sempre verna,
Qual' è colui, che tace e dicer vuole,
  Mi trasse Beatrice, e disse; mira
Quanto è 'l convento delle bianche stole!
  Vedi nostra Città quanto ella gira!
  Vedi li nostri scanni sì ripieni,
  Che poca gente omai ci si disira.

* * *

In forma dunque di candida rosa
  Mi si mostrava la milizia santa,
  Che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa.—*Parad.*, 30–1.

Bernard, Francis and Dominic, the great doctors of the Schools, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura, whom the Church had not yet canonized. And with them are joined—and that with a full consciousness of the line which theology draws between the dispensations of nature and grace—some rare type of virtue among the heathen. Cato is admitted to the outskirts of Purgatory, Trajan and the righteous king of Virgil's poem to the heaven of the just [1].

Without confusion or disturbance to the religious character of his train of thought, he is able freely to subordinate to it the lessons and the great recollections of the Gentile times. He contemplates them with the veil drawn off from them, as now known to form but one whole with the history of the Bible and the Church, in the design of Providence. He presents them in their own colours, as drawn by their own writers—he only adds what Christianity seems to show to be their event. Under the conviction that the light of the Heathen was a real guide from above, calling for vengeance in proportion to unfaithfulness or outrage done to it —'He that nurtureth the heathen, it is He that teacheth man knowledge—shall not He punish?'—the great criminals of profane history are mingled with sinners against God's revealed will, and that with equal dramatic power, with equal feeling of the greatness of their loss. The story of the voyage of Ulysses is told with as much vivid power and pathetic interest as the tales of the day [2]. He

[1] Chi crederebbe giù nel mondo errante,
Che Rifèo Trojano * in questo tondo
Fosse la quinta delle luci sante?
Ora conosce assai di quel, che 'l mondo
Veder non può della divina grazia;
Benchè sua vista non discerna il fondo.—*Parad.*, c. 20

[2] *Inf.*, c. 26.

* Rhipeus justissimus unus
Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui.—*Æn.*, i.

honours unfeignedly the old heathen's brave disdain of ease, that spirit, even to old age, eager, fresh, adventurous, and inquisitive. His faith allowed him to admire all that was beautiful and excellent among the heathen without forgetting that it fell short of what the new gift of the Gospel can alone impart. He saw in it proof that God had never left His will and law without their witness among men. Virtue was virtue still, though imperfect, and unconsecrated—generosity, largeness of soul, truth, condescension, justice, were never unworthy of the reverence of Christians. Hence he uses without fear or scruple the classic element. The examples which recall to the mind of the penitents, by sounds and sights in the different terraces of Purgatory, their sin and the grace they have to attain to come indiscriminately from poetry and Scripture. The sculptured pavement, to which the proud are obliged ever to bow down their eyes, shows at once the humility of S. Mary and of the Psalmist and the condescension of Trajan, and elsewhere the pride of Nimrod and Sennacherib, of Niobe and Cyrus. The envious hear the passing voices of courtesy from saints and heroes, and the bursting cry, like crashing thunder, of repentant jealousy from Cain and Aglaurus; the avaricious, to keep up the memory of their fault, celebrate by day the poverty of Fabricius and the liberality of S. Nicolas, and execrate by night the greediness of Pygmalion and Midas, of Achan, Heliodorus and Crassus.

Dante's all-surveying, all-embracing, mind was worthy to open the grand procession of modern poets. He had chosen his subject in a region remote from popular thought—too awful for it, too abstruse. He had accepted frankly the dogmatic limits of the Church, and thrown himself with even enthusiastic faith into her reasonings, at once so bold and so undoubting—her spirit of certainty, and her deep contemplations on the unseen and infinite.

And in literature he had taken as guides and models, above all criticism and all appeal, the classical writers. Yet with his mind full of the deep and intricate questions of metaphysics and theology, and his poetical taste always owning allegiance to Virgil, Ovid, and Statius—keen and subtle as a Schoolman, as much an idolater of old heathen art and grandeur as the men of the *renaissance*—his eye is as open to the delicacies of character, to the variety of external nature, to the wonders of the physical world; his interest in them as diversified and fresh, his impressions as sharp and distinct, his rendering of them as free and true and forcible, as little weakened or confused by imitation or by conventional words, his language as elastic and as completely under his command, his choice of poetic materials as unrestricted and original, as if he had been born in days which claim as their own such freedom, and such keen discriminative sense of what is real in feeling and image; as if he had never felt the attractions of a crabbed problem of scholastic logic, or bowed before the mellow grace of the Latins. It may be said, indeed, that the time was not yet come when the classics could be really understood and appreciated; and this is true, perhaps fortunate. But, admiring them with a kind of devotion and showing not seldom that he had caught their spirit, he never *attempts* to copy them. His poetry in form and material is all his own. He asserted the poet's claim to borrow from all science and from every phase of nature the associations and images which he wants; and he showed that those images and associations did not lose their poetry by being expressed with the most literal reality.

But let no reader of fastidious taste disturb his temper by the study of Dante. Dante certainly opened that path of freedom and poetic conquest in which the greatest efforts of modern poetry have followed him—opened it with a magnificence and

power which have never been surpassed. But the greatest are but pioneers; they must be content to leave to a posterity which knows more, if it cannot do as much, a keen and even growing sense of their defects. The *Commedia* is open to all the attacks that can be made on grotesqueness and extravagance. This is partly owing, doubtless, to the time, in itself quaint, quainter to us by being remote and ill-understood; but even then, weaker and less daring writers than Dante do not equally offend or astonish us. So that an image or an expression will render forcibly a thought, there is no strangeness which checks him. Barbarous words are introduced to express the cries of the demons or the confusion of Babel—even to represent the incomprehensible song of the blessèd [1]; inarticulate syllables, to convey the impression of some natural sound—the cry of sorrowful surprise:

Alto sospir, che duolo strinse in *hui*—*Purg.*, 16

or the noise of the cracking ice:

Se Tabernicch
Vi fosse su caduto, o Pietra-pana
Non avria pur del orlo fatto *cricch*—*Inf.*, 32

even separate letters, to express an image, to spell a name, or as used in some popular proverb [2]. He employs without scruple, and often with marvellous force of description, any recollection that occurs to him, however homely, of everyday life; the old

[1] *Parad.*, 7, 1–3.
[2] To describe the pinched face of famine:

Parean l' occhiaje anella senza gemme.
Chi nel viso degli uomini legge OMO
Ben avria quivi conosciuto l' *emme* (M).—*Purg.*, 23.

Again

Quella reverenza che s' indonna
Di tutto me, pur per B e per ICE.—*Parad.*, 7.

Nè O si tosto mai, nè I si scrisse,
Com' ei s' accese ed arse.—*Inf.*, 24.

tailor threading his needle with trouble (*Inf.*, 15); the cook's assistant watching over the boiling broth (*Inf.*, 21); the hurried or impatient horse-groom using his curry-comb (*Inf.*, 29); or the common sights of the street or the chamber—the wet wood sputtering on the hearth:

> Come d' un stizzo verde che arso sia
> Dall' un de' capi, che dall' altro geme
> E cigola per vento che va via—*Inf.*, 13[1]

the paper changing colour when about to catch fire:

> Come procede innanzi dall' ardore
> Per lo papiro suso un color bruno
> Che non è nero ancora, e 'l bianco muore—*Inf.*, 25[2]

the steaming of the hand when bathed, in winter:

> Fuman come man bagnata il verno

or the ways and appearances of animals—ants meeting on their path:

> Lì veggio d' ogni parte farsi presta
> Ciascun' ombra, e baciarsi una con una
> Senza restar, contente a breve festa:
> Così per entro loro schiera bruna
> *S' ammusa l' una con l' altra formica,*
> Forse a spiar lor via e lor fortuna—*Purg.*, 26[3]

the snail drawing in its horns (*Inf.*, 25); the hog

[1] Like to a sapling, lighted at one end,
Which at the other hisses with the wind,
And drops of sap doth from the outlet send;
So from the broken twig, both words and blood flowed forth.—WRIGHT.

[2] Like burning paper, when there glides before
The advancing flame a brown and dingy shade,
Which is not black, and yet is white no more.—WRIGHT.

[3] On either hand I saw them haste their meeting,
And kiss each one the other—pausing not—
Contented to enjoy so short a greeting.
Thus do the ants among their dingy band,
Face one another—each their neighbour's lot
Haply to scan, and how their fortunes stand.—WRIGHT.

shut out of its sty and trying to gore with its tusks (*Inf.*, 30); the dogs' misery in summer (*Inf.*, 17); the frogs jumping on to the bank before the water-snake (*Inf.*, 9), or showing their heads above water :

> Come al orlo dell' acqua d' un fosso
> Stan gli ranocchi *pur col muso fuori*,
> Sì che celano i piedi, e l' altro grosso.—*Inf.*, 22 [1]

It must be said that most of these images, though by no means all, occur in the *Inferno;* and that the poet means to paint sin not merely in the greatness of its ruin and misery but in characters which all understand, of strangeness, of vileness, of despicableness, blended with diversified and monstrous horror. Even he seems to despair of his power at times :

> S' io avessi le rime e aspre, e chiocce,
> Come si converrebbe al tristo buco,
> Sovra 'l qual pontan tutte l' altre rocce;
> Io premerrei di mio concetto il suco
> Più pienamente; ma perch' io non l' abbo,
> Non senza tema a dicer mi conduco:
> Che non è 'mpresa da pigliare a gabbo
> Descriver fondo a tutto l' universo,
> Nè da lingua, che chiami mamma, o babbo.—*Inf.*, 32 [2]

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[1] As in a trench, frogs at the water side
Sit squatting, with their noses raised on high,
The while their feet, and all their bulk they hide—
Thus upon either hand the sinners stood.
But Barbariccia now approaching nigh,
Quick they withdrew beneath the boiling flood.
I saw—and still my heart is thrilled with fear—
One spirit linger; as beside a ditch,
One frog remains, the others disappear.—WRIGHT.

[2] Had I a rhyme so rugged, rough, and hoarse
As would become the sorrowful abyss,
O'er which the rocky circles wind their course,
Then with a more appropriate form I might
Endow my vast conceptions; wanting this,
Not without fear I bring myself to write.
For no light enterprise it is, I deem,
To represent the lowest depth of all;
Nor should a childish tongue attempt the theme.
—WRIGHT.

Feeling the difference between sins, in their elements and, as far as we see them, their baseness, he treats them variously. His ridicule is apportioned with a purpose. He passes on from the doom of the sins of incontinence—the storm, the frost and hail, the crushing weights—from the flaming minarets of the city of Dis, of the Furies and Proserpine, 'Donna dell' eterno pianto', where the unbelievers lie, each in his burning tomb—from the river of boiling blood—the wood with the Harpies—the waste of barren sand with fiery snow, where the violent are punished—to the Malebolge, the manifold circles of Falsehood. And here scorn and ridicule in various degrees, according to the vileness of the fraud, begin to predominate, till they culminate in that grim comedy, with its *dramatis personæ* and battle of devils, Draghignazzo, and Graffiacane, and Malacoda, where the peculators and sellers of justice are fished up by the demons from the boiling pitch, but even there overreach and cheat their tormentors, and make them turn their fangs on each other. The diversified forms of falsehood seem to tempt the poet's imagination to cope with its changefulness and inventions, as well as its audacity. The transformations of the wildest dream do not daunt him. His power over language is nowhere more forcibly displayed than in those cantos, which describe the punishments of theft—men passing gradually into serpents, and serpents into men:

> Due e nessun l' imagine perversa
> Parea.—*Inf.*, 25

And when the traitor who murdered his own kinsman was still alive, and seemed safe from the infamy which it was the poet's rule to bestow only on the dead, Dante found a way to inflict his vengeance without an anachronism: Branca D'Oria's body, though on earth, is only animated by a fiend, and his spirit has long since fled to the icy prison [1].

[1] Ed egli a me: Come 'l mio corpo stea
Nel mondo su, nulla scienza porto.

These are strange experiments in poetry; their strangeness is exaggerated as detached passages; but they are strange enough when they meet us in their place in the context as parts of a scene where the mind is strung and overawed by the sustained power, with which dreariness, horror, hideous absence of every form of good, is kept before the imagination and feelings in the fearful picture of human sin. But they belong to the poet's system of direct and forcible representation. What his inward eye sees, what he feels, that he means us to see and feel as he does: to make us see and feel is his art. Afterwards we may reflect and meditate; but first we must see—must see what he saw. Evil and deformity are in the world as well as good and beauty; the eye cannot escape them, they are about our path, in our heart and memory. He has faced them without shrinking or dissembling,

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Cotal vantaggio ha questa Tolommea,
  Che spesse volte l' anima ci cade
  Innanzi, ch' Atropòs mossa le dea.
E perchè tu più volontier mi rade
  Le' nvetriate lagrime dal volto,
  Sappi, che tosto che l' anima trade,
Come fec' io, il corpo suo l' è tolto
  Da un Dimonio, che poscia il governa,
  Mentre che 'l tempo suo tutto sia volto.
Ella ruina in sì fatta cisterna;
  E forse pare ancor lo corpo suso
  Dell' ombra, che di qua dietro mi verna.
Tu 'l dei saper, se tu vien pur mo giuso:
  Egli è ser Branca d' Oria, e son più anni
  Poscia passati, ch' ei fu sì racchiuso.
Io credo, diss' io lui, che tu m' inganni,
  Che Branca d' Oria non morì unquanche,
  E mangia, e bee, e dorme, e veste panni.
Nel fosso su, diss' ei di Malebranche,
  Là dove bolle la tenace pece,
  Non era giunto ancora Michel Zanche;
Che questi lasciò 'l Diavolo in sua vece
  Nel corpo suo, e d' un suo prossimano,
  Che 'l tradimento insieme con lui fece.—*Inf.*, 33

and extorted from them a voice of warning. In all poetry that is written for mere delight, in all poetry which regards but a part or an aspect of nature, they have no place—they disturb and mar; but he had conceived a poetry of the whole, which would be weak or false without them. Yet they stand in his poem as they stand in nature—subordinate and relieved. If the grotesque is allowed to intrude itself, if the horrible and the foul, undisguised and unsoftened, make us shudder and shrink, they are kept in strong check and in due subjection by other poetical influences; and the same power which exhibits them in their naked strength renders its full grace and glory to beauty, its full force and delicacy to the most evanescent feeling.

Dante's eye was free and open to external nature in a degree new among poets, certainly in a far greater degree than among the Latins, even including Lucretius, whom he probably had never read. We have already spoken of his minute notice of the appearance of living creatures; but his eye was caught by the beautiful as well as by the grotesque. Take the following beautiful picture of the bird looking out for dawn:

Come l'augello intra l'amate fronde,
  Posato al nido de suoi dolci nati,
  La notte, che le cose ci nasconde,
Che per veder gli aspetti desiati,
  E per trovar lo cibo, onde li pasca,
  In che i gravi labor gli sono aggrati,
Previene 'l tempo in su l' aperta frasca,
  E con ardente affetto il sole aspetta,
  Fiso guardando, pur che l'alba nasca.—*Parad.*, 23[1]

[1] E'en as the bird that resting in the nest
  Of her sweet brood, the sheltering boughs among,
  While all things are enwrapt in night's dark vest—
Now eager to behold the looks she loves,
  And to find food for her impatient young
  (Whence labour grateful to a mother proves),

Nothing indeed can be more true and original than his images of birds; they are varied and very numerous. We have the water-birds rising in clamorous and changing flocks:

> Come augelli surti di riviera
> *Quasi congratulando a lor pasture,*
> Fanno di sè or tonda or lunga schiera—*Parad.*, 18 [1]

the rooks, beginning to move about at day-break:

> E come per lo natural costume,
> Le pole insieme, al cominciar del giorno
> Si muovono a scaldar le fredde piume,
> Poi altre vanno via senza ritorno,
> Altre rivolgon sè onde son mosse
> Ed altre roteando fan soggiorno—*Parad.*, 21 [2]

the morning sounds of the swallow:

> Nell' ora che comincia i tristi lai
> La rondinella presso alla mattina
> Forse a memoria de' suoi primi guai—*Purg.*, 9 [3]

the joy and delight of the nightingale's song (*Purg.*, 17); the lark, silent at last, filled with its own sweetness:

Forestals the time, high perched upon the spray,
And with impassioned zeal the sun expecting,
Anxiously waiteth the first break of day.—Wright.

[1] And as birds rising from a stream, whence they
Their pastures view, as though their joy confessing,
Now form a round, and now a long array.—Wright.

[2] And as with one accord, at break of day,
The rooks bestir themselves, by nature taught
To chase the dew-drops from their wings away;
Some flying off, to reappear no more—
Others repairing to their nests again,—
Some whirling round—then settling as before.—Wright.

[3] What time the swallow pours her plaintive strain,
Saluting the approach of morning grey,
Thus haply mindful of her former pain.—Wright.



Qual lodoletta, che 'n aere si spazia,
Prima cantando, e *poi tace contenta*
Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia—*Parad.*, 20[1]

the flight of the starlings and storks (*Inf.*, 5; *Purg.*, 24); the mournful cry and long line of the cranes (*Inf.*, 5; *Purg.*, 26); the young birds trying to escape from the nest (*Purg.*, 25); the eagle hanging in the sky:

Con l' ale aperte, e a calare intesa

the dove, standing close to its mate, or wheeling round it:

Sì come quando 'l *colombo si pone*
Presso al compagno, l' uno e l' altro pande
Girando e mormorando l' affezione—*Parad.*, 25[2]

or the flock of pigeons, feeding:

Adunati alla pastura,
Queti, *senza mostrar l' usato orgoglio.*—*Purg.*, 2

Hawking supplies its images: the falcon coming for its food:

Il falcon che prima a piè si mira,
Indi si volge al grido, e si protende,
Per lo disio del pasto, che là il tira—*Purg.*, 19[3]

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[1] E'en as the lark high soaring pours its throat
A while, then rests in silence, as though still
It dwelt enamoured of its last sweet note.—Wright.

[2] As when unto his partner's side, the dove
Approaches near—both fondly circling round,
And cooing, show the fervour of their love;
So these great heirs of immortality
Receive each other; while they joyful sound
The praises of the food they share on high.—Wright.

[3] And, as a falcon, which first scans its feet,
Then turns him to the call, and forward flies,
In eagerness to catch the tempting meat.—Wright.

or just unhooded, pluming itself for its flight:

> Quasi falcon, ch' esce del cappello,
> Muove la testa, e con l' ale s' applaude,
> *Voglia mostrando, e facendo si bello—Parad.*, 19[1]

or returning without success, sullen and loath:

> Come 'l falcon ch' è stato assai su l' ali,
> Che senza veder logoro, o uccello,
> Fa dire al falconiere: Oimè tu cali!
> Discende lasso onde si muove snello
> Per cento ruote, *e da lungi si pone*
> Dal suo maestro, *disdegnoso e fello.—Inf.*, 17[2]

It is curious to observe him taking Virgil's similes, and altering them. When Virgil describes the throng of souls, he compares them to falling leaves, or gathering birds in autumn:

> Quam multa in silvis auctumni frigore primo,
> Lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto,
> Quam multæ glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus
> Trans pontum fugat, et terris immittit apricis.

Dante uses the same images, but without copying:

> Come d' Autunno si levan le foglie,
> L' una appresso dell' altra, infin che 'l ramo
> Rende alla terra tutte le sue spoglie;
> Similemente il mal seme d' Adamo:
> Gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una
> Per cenni, com' augel per suo richiamo.
> Così sen vanno su per l' onda bruna,
> Ed avanti che sien di là discese,
> Anche di qua nuova schiera s' aduna.—*Inf.*, 3[3]

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[1] Lo, as a falcon, from the hood released,
Uplifts his head, and joyous flaps his wings,
His beauty and his eagerness increased.—WRIGHT.

[2] E'en as a falcon, long upheld in air,
Not seeing lure or bird upon the wing,
So that the falconer utters in despair
'Alas, thou stoop'st!' fatigued descends from high;
And whirling quickly round in many a ring,
Far from his master sits—disdainfully.—WRIGHT.

[3] As leaves in autumn, borne before the wind,
Drop one by one, until the branch laid bare,
Sees all its honours to the earth consigned:

Again, compared with one of Virgil's most highly-finished and perfect pictures, the flight of the pigeon, disturbed at first, and then becoming swift and smooth:

> Qualis spelunca subito commota columba,
> Cui domus et dulces latebroso in pumice nidi,
> Fertur in arva volans, plausumque exterrita pennis
> Dat tecto ingentem, mox aere lapsa quieto
> Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas—

the Italian's simplicity and strength may balance the 'ornata parola' of Virgil:

> Quali colombe dal disio chiamate,
> Con *l' ali aperte e ferme* al dolce nido
> Volan per l' aer dal voler portate.—*Inf.*, 5[1]

Take, again, the *times of the day*, with what is characteristic of them—appearances, lights, feelings—seldom dwelt on at length, but carried at once to the mind and stamped upon it sometimes by a single word. The sense of *morning*, its inspiring and

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> So cast them downward at his summons all
> The guilty race of Adam from that strand—
> Each as a falcon answering to the call.—WRIGHT.

[1] As doves, by strong affection urged, repair
> With firm expanded wings to their sweet nest,
> Borne by the impulse of their will through air.
> —WRIGHT.

It is impossible not to be reminded at every step, in spite of the knowledge and taste which Mr. Cary and Mr. Wright have brought to their most difficult task, of the truth which Dante has expressed with his ordinary positiveness. He is saying that he does not wish his *Canzoni* to be explained in Latin to those who could not read them in Italian: 'Che sarebbe sposta la loro sentenzia colà dove elle *non la potessono colla loro bellezza portare.* E però sappia ciascuno che nulla cosa per legame musaico (i.e. poetico) armonizzata, si può della sua loquela in altra trasmutare senza rompere tutta la sua dolcezza e armonia. E questa è la ragione per che Omero non si mutò mai di Greco in Latino, come l' altre scritture che avemo da loro.'—*Convito*, i, c. 8, p. 49.

cheering strength, softens the opening of the Inferno, breathes its refreshing calm, in the interval of repose after the last horrors of hell, in the first canto of the *Purgatorio*, and prepares for the entrance into the earthly Paradise at its close. In the waning light of *evening*, and its chilling sense of loneliness, he prepared himself for his dread pilgrimage:

> Lo giorno se n' andava, e l' aer bruno
> Toglieva gli animai che sono 'n terra
> Dalle fatiche loro; ed io sol uno
> M' apparechiava a sostener la guerra
> Sì del cammino, e sì della pietate.—*Inf.*, 2

Indeed there is scarcely an hour of day or night which has not left its own recollection with him; of which we cannot find some memorial in his poem. Evening and night have many. Evening, with its softness and melancholy, its exhaustion and languor, after the work, perhaps unfulfilled, of day, its regrets and yearnings, its sounds and doubtful lights, the distant bell, the closing chants of Compline, the '*Salve Regina*', the '*Te lucis ante terminum*', with its insecurity and its sense of protection from above, broods over the poet's first resting-place on his heavenly road—that still, solemn, dreamy scene, the Valley of Flowers in the mountain side, where those who have been negligent about their salvation but not altogether faithless and fruitless—the assembled shades of great kings and of poets—wait, looking upwards, 'pale and humble', for the hour when they may begin in earnest their penance (*Purg.*, 7, and 8). The level, blinding, evening beams (*Purg.*, 15), the contrast of gathering darkness in the valley or on the shore with the lingering lights on the mountain (*Purg.*, 17), the rapid sinking of the sun and approach of night in the south (*Purg.*, 27), the flaming sunset clouds of August, the sheet lightning of summer (*Purg.*, 5), have left pictures in his mind which an incidental touch re-awakens and a few strong words

are sufficient to express. Other appearances he describes with more fulness. The stars coming out one by one, baffling at first the eye:

> Ed ecco intorno di chiarezza pari
> Nascer un lustro sopra quel che v' era,
> A guisa d' orizzonte, che rischiari.
> *E sì come al salir di prima sera*
> *Comincian per lo Ciel nuove parvenze,*
> *Sì che la cosa pare, e non par vera*—*Parad.*, 14[1]

or else, bursting out suddenly over the heavens:

> Quando colui che tutto il mondo allume,
> Del' emisperio nostro si discende,
> E 'l giorno d' ogni partè si consuma;
> Lo ciel che sol di lui prima s' accende,
> Subitamente si rifà parvente
> Per molte luci in che una risplende—*Parad.*, 20[2]

or the effect of shooting stars:

> Quale per li seren tranquilli e puri
> Discorre ad ora ad or subito fuoco
> Movendo gli occhi che stavan sicuri,
> E pare stella che tramuti loco,
> Se non che dalla parte onde s' accende
> Nulla sen perde, ed esso dura poco—*Parad.*, 15[3]

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[1] And lo, on high, and lurid as the one
Now there, encircling it, a light arose,
Like heaven when re-illumined by the sun:
And as at the first lighting up of eve
The sky doth new appearances disclose,
That now seem real, now the sight deceive.—WRIGHT.

[2] When he, who with his universal ray
The world illumines, quits our hemisphere,
And, from each quarter, daylight wears away;
The heaven, erst kindled by his beam alone,
Sudden its lost effulgence doth repair
By many lights illumined but by one.—WRIGHT.

[3] As oft along the pure and tranquil sky
A sudden fire by night is seen to dart,
Attracting forcibly the heedless eye;
And seems to be a star that changes place,
Save that no star is lost from out the part
It quits, and that it lasts a moment's space.—WRIGHT.

or, again, that characteristic sight of the Italian summer night, the fire-flies :

> Quante il villan che al poggio si riposa,
> Nel tempo che colui che 'l mondo schiara
> La faccia sua a noi tien men ascosa,
> Come la mosca cede alla zenzara,
> Vede lucciole giù per la vallea,
> Forse colà dove vendemmia ed ara.—*Inf.*, 26[1]

Noon, too, does not want its characteristic touches, the lightning-like glancing of the lizard's rapid motion :

> Come il ramarro sotto la gran fersa
> Ne' dì canicular cangiando siepe
> Folgore par, se la via attraversa—*Inf.*, 25[2]

the motes in the sunbeam at noontide (*Par.*, 14), its clear, diffused, insupportable brightness, filling all things :

> E tutti eran già pieni
> Dell' alto dì i giron del sacro monte—*Purg.*, 19

and veiling the sun in his own light :

> Io veggio ben sì come *tu t' annidi*
> *Nel proprio lume.*
> * * *
> Sì come 'l sol che si cela egli stessi
> Per troppa luce, quando 'l caldo ha rose,
> Le temperanze de' vapori spessi.—*Parad.*, 5

But the sights and feelings of morning are what he touches on most frequently, and he does so with the precision of one who had watched them with

[1] As in that season when the sun least veils
His face that lightens all, what time the fly
Gives place to the shrill gnat, the peasant then,
Upon some cliff reclined, beneath him sees
Fire-flies innumerous spangling o'er the vale,
Vineyard or tilth, where his day-labour lies.—CARY.

[2] As underneath the dog-star's scorching ray
The lizard, darting swift from fence to fence,
Appears like lightning, if he cross the way.—WRIGHT.

often-repeated delight: the scented freshness of the breeze that stirs before daybreak:

> E quale annunziatrice degli albori
> Aura di maggio muovesi ed olezza
> Tutta impregnata dall' erba e da' fiori;
> Tal mi senti' un vento dar per mezza
> La fronte—*Purg.*, 24[1]

the chill of early morning (*Purg.*, 19); the dawn stealing on, and the stars, one by one, fading 'infino alla più bella' (*Parad.*, 30); the brightness of the 'trembling morning star':

> Par tremolando mattutina stella;

the serenity of the dawn, the blue gradually gathering in the east, spreading over the brightening sky (*Parad.*, 1); then succeeded by the orange tints, and Mars setting red, through the mist over the sea:

> Ed ecco, qual sul presso del mattino
> Per li grossi vapor Marte rosseggia
> Giù nel ponente, sopra 'l suol marino,
> Cotal m' apparve, s' io ancor lo veggia,
> Un lume per lo mar venir si ratto
> Che 'l muover suo nessun volar pareggia—*Purg.*, 2[2]

the distant sea-beach quivering in the early light:

> L' alba vinceva l' ora mattutina
> Che fuggia innanzi, sì che di lontano
> Conobbi *il tremolar della marina*—*Purg.*, 1[3]

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[1] As when, announcing the approach of day,
Impregnated with herbs and flowers of Spring,
Breathes fresh and redolent the air of May—
Such was the breeze that gently fanned my head;
And I perceived the waving of a wing
Which all around ambrosial odours shed.—WRIGHT.

[2] When lo!—like Mars, in aspect fiery red
Seen through the vapour, when the morn is nigh
Far in the west, above the briny bed,
So (might I once more see it) o'er the sea
A light approached with such rapidity,
Flies not the bird that might its equal be.—WRIGHT.

[3] Now 'gan the vanquish'd matin hour to flee;
And seen from far, as onward came the day,
I recognised the trembling of the sea.—WRIGHT.

the contrast of east and west at the moment of sunrise, and the sun appearing, clothed in mist:

> Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno
> La parte oriental tutta rosata,
> E l' altro ciel di bel sereno adorno;
> E la faccia del sol nascere ombrata
> Sì che per temperanza di vapori
> L' occhio lo sostenea lungo fiato—*Purg.*, 3[1]

or breaking through it, and shooting his beams over the sky:

> Di tutte parti saettava il giorno
> Lo sol ch' avea con le saette conte
> Di mezzo 'l ciel cacciato 'l Capricorno.—*Purg.*, 2[2]

But *light* in general is his special and chosen source of poetic beauty. No poet that we know has shown such singular sensibility to its varied appearances—has shown that he felt it in itself the cause of a distinct and peculiar pleasure, delighting the eye apart from form, as music delights the ear apart from words, and capable like music of definite character, of endless variety, and infinite meanings. He must have studied and dwelt upon it like music. His mind is charged with its effects and combinations, and they are rendered with a force, a brevity, a precision, a heedlessness and unconsciousness of ornament, an indifference to circumstance and detail; they flash out with a spontaneous readiness, a suitableness and felicity, which show the familiarity and grasp given only by daily observation, daily thought, daily pleasure. Light everywhere—

[1] Erewhile the eastern regions have I seen
At daybreak glow with roseate colours, and
The expanse beside all beauteous and serene;
And the sun's face so shrouded at its rise,
And tempered by the mists which overhung,
That I could gaze on it with steadfast eyes.—WRIGHT.

[2] On every side the sun shot forth the day,
And had already with his arrows bright
From the mid-heaven chased Capricorn away.—WRIGHT.

in the sky and earth and sea, in the star, the flame, the lamp, the gem, broken in the water, reflected from the mirror, transmitted pure through the glass, or coloured through the edge of the fractured emerald, dimmed in the mist, the halo, the deep water, streaming through the rent cloud, glowing in the coal, quivering in the lightning, flashing in the topaz and the ruby, veiled behind the pure alabaster, mellowed and clouding itself in the pearl —light contrasted with shadow, shading off and copying itself in the double rainbow, like voice and echo—light seen within light, as voice discerned within voice, '*quando una è ferma, e l' altra va e riede*'—the brighter 'nestling' itself in the fainter, the purer set off on the less clear, '*come perla in bianca fronte*'—light in the human eye and face, displaying, figuring, and confounded with its expressions—light blended with joy in the eye:

> luce
> Come letizia in pupilla viva;

and in the smile:

> Vincendo me col lume d' un sorriso;

joy lending its expression to light:

> Quivi la donna mia vidi sì lieta
> Che più lucente se ne fè il pianeta,
> E se la *stella si cambiò, e rise,*
> Qual mi fec' io—*Parad.*, 5

light from every source and in all its shapes, illuminates, irradiates, gives its glory to, the *Commedia.* The remembrance of our 'serene life' beneath the 'fair stars' keeps up continually the gloom of the *Inferno.* Light, such as we see it and recognise it —the light of morning and evening, growing and fading—takes off from the unearthliness of the Purgatorio; peopled as it is by the undying, who, though suffering for sin, can sin no more, it is thus made like our familiar world, made to touch our sympathies as an image of our own purification in

the flesh. And, when he rises beyond the regions of earthly day, light, simple, unalloyed, unshadowed, eternal, lifts the creations of his thought above all affinity to time and matter; light never fails him, as the expression of the gradations of bliss, never reappears the same, never refuses the new shapes of his invention, never becomes confused or dim—though it is seldom thrown into distinct figure, and still more seldom *coloured*. Only once that we remember is the thought of colour forced on us—when the bright joy of heaven suffers change and eclipse, and deepens into red at the sacrilege of men [1].

Yet his eye is everywhere, not confined to the beauty or character of the sky and its lights. His range of observation and largeness of interest prevent that line of imagery, which is his peculiar instrument and predilection, from becoming in spite of its brightness and variety dreamy and monotonous, prevent it from arming against itself sympathies which it does not touch. He has watched with equal attention, and draws with not less power, the occurrences and sights of Italian country life, the summer whirlwind sweeping over the plain—'*dinanzi polveroso va superbo*' (*Inf.*, 9), the rain-storm of the Apennines (*Purg.*, 5), the peasant's alternations of feeling in spring:

> In quella parte del giovinetto anno
> Che 'l sole i crin sotto l' Aquario tempra,
> E già le notti al mezzo dì sen vanno;
> Quando la brina in su la terra assempra
> L' imagine di sua sorella bianca,
> Ma poco dura alla sua penna tempra,
> Lo villanello a cui la roba manca
> Si leva e guarda, e vede la campagna
> Biancheggiar tutta; ond 'ei si batte l' anca;
> Ritorna a casa, e qua e là si lagna

1 *Parad.*, 27.

Come 'l tapin che non sa che si faccia:
Poi riede e la speranza ringavagna
  Veggendo 'l mondo aver cangiata faccia
In poco d' ora, e prende il suo vincastro
E fuor le pecorelle a pascer caccia—*Inf.*, 24 [1]

the manner in which sheep come out from the fold:

  Come le pecorelle escon del chiuso
A una a due a tre, e l' altre stanno,
Timidette atterrando l' occhio e' l muso;
  E ciò che fa la prima, e l' altre fanno,
Addossandosi a lei s' ella s' arresta
Semplici e quete, e lo 'mperchè non sanno:
  Si vid' io muover a venir la testa
Di quella mandria fortunata allotta,
Pudica in faccia e nell' andare onesta.
  Come color dinanzi vider rotta
La luce . . . .
  Ristaro, e trasser se indietro alquanto,
E tutti gli altri che veniano appresso,
Non sappiendo il perchè, fero altrettanto.—*Purg.*, 3

So with the beautiful picture of the goats on the mountain, chewing the cud in the noontide heat and stillness, and the goatherd, resting on his staff and watching them—a picture which no traveller among the mountains of Italy or Greece can have missed, or have forgotten:

[1] In the new year, when Sol his tresses gay
  Dips in Aquarius, and the tardy night
  Divides her empire with the lengthening day—
When o'er the earth the hoar-frost pure and bright
  Assumes the image of her sister white,
  Then quickly melts before the genial light—
The rustic, now exhausted his supply,
  Rises betimes—looks out—and sees the land
  All white around, whereat he strikes his thigh—
Turns back, and grieving wanders here and there,
  Like one disconsolate and at a stand;
  Then issues forth, forgetting his despair,
For lo!—the face of nature he beholds
  Changed on a sudden—takes his crook again,
  And drives his flock to pasture from the folds.
—WRIGHT.

Quali si fanno ruminando manse
Le capre, *state rapide e proterve*
Sopra le cime avanti che sien pranse,
Tacite al ombra mentre che 'l sol ferve,
Guardate dal pastor che 'n su la verga
Poggiato s' è, e lor poggiato serve.—*Purg.*, 27[1]

So again, with his recollections of cities—the crowd, running together to hear news (*Purg.*, 2), or pressing after the winner of the game (*Purg.*, 6); the blind men at the church-doors, or following their guide through the throng (*Purg.*, 13, 16); the friars walking along in silence, one behind another:

Taciti, soli, e senza compagnia
N' andavam, *l' un dinanzi, e l' altro dopo*
Come i frati minor vanno per via.—*Inf.*, 23

He turns to account in his poem the pomp and clamour of the host taking the field (*Inf.*, 22); the devices of heraldry; the answering chimes of morning bells over the city[2]; the inventions and appliances of art, the wheels within wheels of clocks (*Par.*, 24), the many-coloured carpets of the East (*Inf.*, 17); music and dancing; the organ and voice in church:

Voce mista al dolce suono
he or sì orno s' intendon le parole—*Purg.*, 9

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[1] Like goats that having over the crags pursued
Their wanton sports, now, quiet pass the time
In ruminating—sated with their food,
Beneath the shade, while glows the sun on high—
Watched by the goatherd with unceasing care,
As on his staff he leans, with watchful eye.—Wright.

[2] Indi come orologio che ne chiami
Nell' ora che la sposa di Dio surge
A mattinar lo sposo perchè l' ami,
Che l' una parte e l' altra tira ed urge
Tin tin sonando con si dolce nota
Che 'l ben disposto spirto d' amor turge;
Così vid' io la gloriosa ruota
Muoversi e render voce a voce, in tempra
Ed indolcezza ch' esser non può nota
Se non colà dove 'l gioir s' insempra.—*Parad.*, 10.

the lute and voice in the chamber (*Par.*, 20); the dancers preparing to begin[1], or waiting to catch a new strain[2]. Or, again, the images of domestic life, the mother's ways to her child, reserved and reproving—'che al figlio par superba', or cheering him with her voice, or watching him compassionately in the wandering of fever:

> Ond' ella, appresso d' un pio sospiro
> Gli occhi drizzò ver me, con quel sembiante
> Che madre fa sopra figliuol deliro.—*Parad.*, 1

Nor is he less observant of the more delicate phenomena of mind, in its inward workings and its connection with the body. The play of features, the involuntary gestures and attitudes of the passions, the power of eye over eye, of hand upon hand, the charm of voice and expression, of musical sounds even when not understood—feelings, sensations, and states of mind which have a name, and others equally numerous and equally common which have none—these, often so fugitive, so shifting, so baffling and intangible, are expressed with a directness, a simplicity, a sense of truth at once broad and refined which seized at once on the congenial mind of his countrymen, and pointed out to them the road which they have followed in art, unapproached as yet by any competitors[3].

[1] E come surge, e va, ed entra in ballo
Vergine lieta, sol per farne onore
Alla novizia, e non per alcun fallo.—*Parad.*, 25

[2] Donne mi parver, non da ballo sciolte,
Ma che s' arrestin tacite ascoltando
Fin che le nuove note hanno ricolte.—*Parad.*, 10

[3] For instance: *thoughts upon thoughts ending in sleep and dreams:*

> Nuovo pensier dentro de me si mise,
> Dal qual più altri nacquero e diversi;
> *E tanto d' uno in altro vaneggiai*
> *Che gli occhi per vaghezza ricopersi,*
> *E 'l pensamento in sogno trasmutai.*—*Purg.*, 18

And he has anticipated the latest schools of modern poetry, by making not merely nature, but

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sleep stealing off when broken by light:

Come si frange il sonno, ove di butto
Nuova luce percuote 'l viso chiuso,
Che fratto guizza pria che muoja tutto.—*Purg.*, 17

the shock of sudden awakening:

Come al lume acuto si disonna,
* * *
E lo svegliato ciò che vede abborre,
Sì nescia è la subita vigilia,
Finchè la stimativa nol soccorre.—*Parad.*, 26

uneasy feelings produced by sight or representation of something unnatural:

Come per sostentar solajo o tetto
Per mensola talvolta una figura
Si vede giunger le ginocchia al petto,
La qual fa del non ver vera rancura
Nascer a chi la vede; così fatti
Vid' io color.—*Purg.*, 10

blushing in innocent sympathy for others:

E come donna onesta che permane
Di se sicura, e *per l' altrui fallenza*
Pure ascoltando timida si fane:
Così Beatrice trasmutò sembianza.—*Parad.*, 27

asking and answering by looks only:

Volsi gli occhi agli occhi al signor mio;
Ond' elli m' assentì con lieto cenno
Ciò che chiedea la vista del disio.—*Purg.*, 19

watching the effect of words:

Posto avea fine al suo ragionamento
L' alto dottore, ed attento guardava
Nella mia vista s' io parea contento.
Ed io, cui nuova sete ancor frugava,
Di fuor taceva e dentro dicea: forse
Lo troppo dimandar ch' io fo, li grava.
Ma quel padre verace, che s' accorse
Del timido voler che non s' apriva,
Parlando, di parlare ardir mi porse.—*Purg.*, 18

science tributary to a poetry with whose general aim and spirit it has little in common—tributary in its

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Dante betraying Virgil's presence to Statius, by his involuntary smile:

Volser Virgilio a me queste parole
Con viso che tacendo dicea: 'taci;'
Ma non può tutto la virtù che vuole;
Che riso e pianto son tanto seguaci
Alla passion da che ciascun si spicca,
Che men seguon voler ne' più veraci.
Io pur sorrisi, come l' uom ch' ammicca:
Perchè l' ombra si tacque, e riguardommi
Negli occhi ove 'l sembiante più si ficca.
E se tanto lavoro in bene assommi,
Disse, perchè la faccia tua testeso
Un lampeggiar d' un riso dimostrommi?—*Purg.*, 21

smiles and words together:

Per le *sorrise parolette brevi.*—*Parad.*, 1

eye meeting eye:

Gli occhi ritorsi avanti
Dritti nel lume della dolce guida
Che sorridendo ardea negli occhi santi.—*Parad.*, 3

Come si vede qui alcuna volta
L' affetto nella vista, s' ello è tanto
Che da lui sia tutta l' anima tolta:
Così nel fiammeggiar del fulgor santo
A cui mi volsi, conobbi la voglia
In lui di ragionarmi ancore alquanto.—*Parad.*, 18

gentleness of voice:

E cominciommi a dir soave e piana
Con angelica voce in sua favella.—*Inf.*, 2

E come agli occhi miei si fe' più bella,
Così con voce più dolce e soave,
Ma non con questa moderna favella,
Dissemi.—*Parad.*, 16

chanting:

Te lucis ante si divotamente
Le uscì di bocca e con sì dolce note,
Che fece me a me uscir di mente.
E l' altre poi dolcemente e divote
Seguitar lei per tutto l' inno intero,
Avendo gli occhi alle superne ruote.—*Purg.*, 8

exact forms, even in its technicalities. He speaks of the Mediterranean Sea not merely as a historian or an observer of its storms or its smiles, but as a geologist[1]; of light, not merely in its beautiful appearances but in its own natural laws[2]. There is a charm, an imaginative charm to him, not merely in

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chanting blended with the sound of the organ:

Io mi rivolsi attento al primo tuono,
E *Te Deum laudamus* mi parea
Udire in voce mista al dolce suono.
Tale imagine appunto mi rendea
Ciò ch' io udiva, qual prender si suole
Quando a cantar con organi si stea;
Ch' or sì, or no, s' intendon le parole.—*Purg.*, 9

voices in concert:

E come in voce voce si discerne
Quando una è ferma, e 'l altra va e riede.—*Parad.*, 8

attitudes and gestures: e.g. Beatrice addressing him,

Con atto e voce di spedito duce.—*Parad.*, 30

Sordello eyeing the travellers:

Venimmo a lei: o anima Lombarda
Come ti stavi altera e disdegnosa
E nel muover degli occhi onesta e tarda.
Ella non ci diceva alcuna cosa,
Ma lasciavane gir, solo guardando,
A guisa di leon quando si posa.—*Purg.*, 6

the angel moving 'dry-shod' over the Stygian pool:

Dal volto rimovea quell' aer grasso
Menando la sinistra innanzi spesso,
E sol di quell' angoscia parea lasso.
Ben m' accorsi ch' egli era del ciel messo,
E volsimi al maestro; e quei fe' segno
Ch' io stessi cheto ed inchinassi ed esso.
Ahi quanto mi parea pien di disdegno.
* * *
Poi si rivolse per la strada lorda,
E non fe' motto a noi, ma fe' sembiante
D' uomo cui altra cura stringa e morde
Che quella di colui che gli è davante.—*Inf.*, 9

[1] '*La maggior valle*, in che l' acqua si spandi.'—*Parad.*, 9
[2] e.g. *Purg.*, 15

the sensible magnificence of the heavens, 'in their silence, and light, and watchfulness', but in the system of Ptolemy and the theories of astrology; and he delights to interweave with the poetry of feeling and of the outward sense, the grandeur (so far as he knew it) of order, proportion, measured magnitudes, the relations of abstract forces, displayed on such a scene as the material universe, as if he wished to show that imagination in its boldest flight was not afraid of the company of the clear and subtle intellect.

Indeed the real never daunts him. It is his leading principle of poetical composition to draw out of things the poetry which is latent in them, either essentially or as they are portions, images, or reflexes of something greater—not to invest them with a poetical semblance by means of words which bring with them poetical associations and have received a general poetical stamp. Dante has few of those indirect charms which flow from the subtle structure and refined graces of language—none of that exquisitely fitted and self-sustained mechanism of choice words of the Greeks; none of that tempered and majestic amplitude of diction, which clothes, like the folds of a royal robe, the thoughts of the Latins; none of that abundant play of fancy and sentiment, soft or grand, in which the later Italian poets delighted. Words with him are used sparingly, never in play; never because they carry with them poetical recollections; never for their own sake; but because they are instruments which will give the deepest, clearest, sharpest, stamp of that image which the poet's mind, piercing to the very heart of his subject or seizing the characteristic feature which to other men's eyes is confused and lost among others accidental and common, draws forth in severe and living truth. Words will not always bend themselves to his demands on them, and make him often uncouth, abrupt, obscure. But he is too much in earnest to heed uncouthness; and his

power over language is too great to allow uncertainty as to what he means to be other than occasional. Nor is he a stranger to the utmost sweetness and melody of language. But it appears, unsought for and unlaboured, the spontaneous and inevitable obedience of the tongue and pen to the impressions of the mind, as grace and beauty, of themselves, 'command and guide the eye' of the painter, who thinks not of his hand but of them. All is in character with the absorbed and serious earnestness which pervades the poem; there is no toying, no ornament, that a man in earnest might not throw into his words—whether in single images or in pictures, like that of the Meadow of the Heroes (*Inf.*, 4), or the angel appearing in hell to guide the poet through the burning city (*Inf.*, 9), or in histories, like those of Count Ugolino, or the life of S. Francis (*Parad.*, 11), or in dramatic scenes like the meeting of the poets Sordello and Virgil (*Purgat.*, 6), or that one, unequalled in beauty, where Dante himself, after years of forgetfulness and sin, sees Beatrice in glory, and hears his name, never but once pronounced during the vision, from her lips [1].

[1] Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno
La parte oriental tutta rosata,
E l' altro ciel di bel sereno adorno,
E la faccia del sol nascere ombrata,
Sì che per temperanza di vapori
L' occhio lo sostenea lunga fiata;
Così dentro una nuvola di fiori,
Che dalle mani angeliche saliva,
E ricadeva giù dentro e di fuori,
Sovra candido vel cinta d' oliva
Donna m' apparve sotto verde manto
Vestita di color di fiamma viva.
E lo spirito mio, che già cotanto
Tempo era stato con la sua presenza,
Non era di stupor, tremando, affranto.
Sanza degli occhi aver più conoscenza,
Per occulta virtù, che da lei mosse,
D' antico amor sentì' la gran potenza.
* * *

But this or any other array of scenes and images, might be matched from poets of a far lower order than Dante: and to specimens which might be brought together of his audacity and extravagance, no parallel could be found except among the lowest. We cannot, honestly, plead the barbarism of the time as his excuse. That, doubtless, contributed largely to them; but they were the faults of the man. In another age their form might have been different; yet we cannot believe so much of time, that it would have tamed Dante. Nor can we wish it. It might have made him less great; and his greatness can well bear its own blemishes, and will not less meet its due honour among men because they can detect its kindred to themselves.

The greatness of his work is not in its details—to be made or marred by them. It is the greatness of a comprehensive and vast conception, sustaining without failure the trial of its long and hazardous execution, and fulfilling at its close the hope and

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Volsimi alla sinistra col rispitto,
  Col quale il fantolin corre alla mamma,
  Quando ha paura, o quando egli è afflitto,
Per dicere a Virgilio: Men che dramma
  Di sangue m' è rimasa, che non tremi:
  Conosco i segni dell' antica fiamma.
Ma Virgilio n' avea lasciati scemi
  Di se, Virgilio dolcissimo padre,
  Virgilio, a cui per mia salute diemi:
* * *
Dante, perchè Virgilio se ne vada,
  Non piangere anche, non piangere ancora;
  Che pianger ti convien per altra spada.
* * *
Regalmente nell' atto ancor proterva
  Continuò, come colui che dice,
  E 'l più caldo parlar dietro riserva:
Guardami ben: ben son, ben son Beatrice:
  Come degnasti d' accedere al monte?
  Non sapei tu, che qui è l' uom felice?—*Purg.*, 30

But extracts can give but an imperfect notion of this grand and touching canto.

promise of its beginning; like the greatness—which we watch in its course with anxious suspense, and look back upon when it is secured by death with deep admiration—of a perfect life. Many a surprise, many a difficulty, many a disappointment, many a strange reverse and alternation of feelings, attend the progress of the most patient and admiring reader of the *Commedia;* as many as attend on one who follows the unfolding of a strong character in life. We are often shocked when we were prepared to admire; repelled, when we came with sympathy; the accustomed key fails at a critical moment; depths are revealed which we cannot sound, mysteries which baffle and confound us. But the check is for a time: the gap and chasm does not dissever. Haste is even an evidence of life—the brief word, the obscure hint, the unexplained, the unfinished, or even the unachieved, are the marks of human feebleness but are also among those of human truth. The unity of the whole is unimpaired. The strength which is working it out, though it may have at times disappointed us, shows no hollowness or exhaustion. The surprise of disappointment is balanced: there is the surprise of unimagined excellence. Powers do more than they promised; and that spontaneous and living energy without which neither man nor poet can be trusted, and which showed its strength even in its failures, shows it more abundantly in the novelties of success—by touching sympathies which have never been touched before, by the unconstrained freshness with which it meets the proverbial and familiar, by the freedom with which it adjusts itself to a new position or an altered task—by the completeness, unstudied and instinctive, with which it holds together dissimilar and uncongenial materials, and forces the most intractable, the most unaccustomed, to submission, to receive the colour of the whole—by its orderly and unmistakeable onward march, and its progress, as in height, so in what corresponds to height. It was one and the same man who rose from the despair, the agony, the

vivid and vulgar horrors of the *Inferno*, to the sense and imagination of certainty, sinlessness, and joy ineffable—the same man whose power and whose sympathies failed him not, whether discriminating and enumerating, as if he had gone through them all, the various forms of human suffering, from the dull, gnawing, sense of the loss of happiness to the infinite woes of the wrecked and ruined spirit, and the coarser pangs of the material flesh; or, dwelling on the changeful lights and shades of earnest repentance, in its hard but not unaided or ungladdened struggle, and on that restoration to liberty and peace which can change even this life into paradise and reverse the doom which made sorrow our condition and laughter and joy unnatural and dangerous—the penalty of that first fault, which

> In pianto ed in affanno
> Cambiò onesto riso e dolce giuoco;

or, rising finally above mortal experience, to imagine the freedom of the saints and the peace of eternity. In this consists the greatness of his power. It is not necessary to read through the *Commedia* to see it: open it where we please, we see that he is on his way, and whither he is going; episode and digression share in the solemnity of the general order.

And his greatness was more than that of power. That reach and play of sympathy ministered to a noble wisdom, which used it thoughtfully and consciously for a purpose to which great poetry had never yet been applied, except in the mouth of prophets. Dante was a stern man, and more than stern, among his fellows. But he has left to those who never saw his face an inheritance the most precious; he has left them that which, reflecting and interpreting their minds, does so, not to amuse, not to bewilder, not to warp, not to turn them in upon themselves in distrust or gloom or selfishness; not merely to hold up a mirror to nature, but to make them true and make them hopeful. Dark as are his words of individuals, his thoughts are not

dark or one-sided about mankind; his is no cherished and perverse severity—his faith is too large, too real, for such a fault. He did not write only the *Inferno*. And the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* are not an afterthought, a feebler appendix and compensation, conceived when too late, to a finished whole, which has taken up into itself the poet's real mind. Nowhere else in poetry of equal power is there the same balanced view of what man is and may be; nowhere so wide a grasp shown of his various capacities, so strong a desire to find a due place and function for all his various dispositions. Where he stands contrasted in his idea of human life with other poets, who have been more powerful exponents of its separate sides, is in his large and truthful comprehensiveness. Fresh from the thought of man's condition as a whole, fresh from the thought of his goodness, his greatness, his power, as well as of his evil, his mind is equally in tune when rejoicing over his restoration, as when contemplating the ruins of his fall. He never lets go the recollection that human life, if it grovels at one end in corruption and sin, and has to pass through the sweat and dust and disfigurement of earthly toil, has throughout, compensations, remedies, functions, spheres innumerable of profitable activity, sources inexhaustible of delight and consolation—and at the other end a perfection which cannot be named. No one ever measured the greatness of man in all its forms with so true and yet with so admiring an eye and with such glowing hope as he who has also portrayed so awfully man's littleness and vileness. And he went further—no one who could understand and do homage to greatness in man ever drew the line so strongly between greatness and goodness, and so unhesitatingly placed the hero of this world only, placed him in all his magnificence, honoured with no timid or dissembling reverence, at the distance of worlds, below the place of the lowest saint.

Those who know the *Divina Commedia* best will best know how hard it is to be the interpreter of such a mind, but they will sympathize with the wish to call attention to it. They know, and would wish others also to know, not by hearsay but by experience, the power of that wonderful poem. They know its austere yet subduing beauty; they know what force there is in its free and earnest and solemn verse, to strengthen, to tranquillize, to console. It is a small thing that it has the secret of Nature and Man, that a few keen words have opened their eyes to new sights in earth and sea and sky, have taught them new mysteries of sound, have made them recognize, in distinct image or thought, fugitive feelings or their unheeded expression, by look or gesture or motion, that it has enriched the public and collective memory of society with new instances, never to be lost, of human feeling and fortune, has charmed ear and mind by the music of its stately march and the variety and completeness of its plan. But besides this they know how often its seriousness has put to shame their trifling, its magnanimity their faintheartedness, its living energy their indolence, its stern and sad grandeur rebuked low thoughts, its thrilling tenderness overcome sullenness and assuaged distress, its strong faith quelled despair and soothed perplexity, its vast grasp imparted the sense of harmony to the view of clashing truths. They know how often they have found, in times of trouble, if not light, at least that deep sense of reality, permanent though unseen, which is more than light can always give—in the view which it has suggested to them of the judgments and the love of God[1].

[1] It is necessary to state that these remarks were written before we had seen the chapter on Dante in *Italy, Past and Present*, by L. Mariotti. Had we become acquainted with it earlier, we should have had to refer to it often, in the way of acknowledgment, and as often in the way of strong protest.

ST ANSELM AND WILLIAM RUFUS

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WHEN a man has played a great part in his generation, and in the course of years the cause or quarrel in which he was engaged becomes obsolete and is forgotten, his name often survives and is handed on with a certain vague reverence, people know not why—*volitat per ora virum;* but the sound is lifeless and unmeaning; he has become a sort of shadowy εἴδωλον, without substance or distinguishable feature. The name of St Anselm is thus preserved among us; when it is mentioned we recognize it as one which is not quite new to us; but who he was, when he lived, what he did, whether he was Archbishop of Canterbury or Constantinople, are questions about which a great proportion of readers would feel no shame in confessing ignorance.

Yet St Anselm was a great man; he was looked upon as *the man* of his time in the Western Church; he was one who in his day fought most nobly the good fight, and drew to himself the hearts of Christendom. Among all who have sat on the throne of Canterbury, none used to be looked upon as greater or more deserving of lasting remembrance in the English Church.

But it was his fortune to be called to defend the cause of religion, by deed and suffering, against the pride and licentiousness of the feudal system, and to be one of the foremost in the contest. And this, which so endeared him to Englishmen of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, has made Englishmen of the eighteenth and nineteenth forget him. The cause to which he devoted himself so earnestly has ceased to be looked upon as the religious or the popular one; where it does not call forth feelings of bitter hostility, it is regarded with suspicion or indifference.

Partly from ignorance, partly from inveterate pre-

judice, we cannot get ourselves to look upon the great struggles between the Church and the Crown in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as other than political. From our childhood we have been used to consider the efforts of the reforming party among the clergy as little short of rebellion; as mere ambitious and hypocritical aggressions on the state, for the lowest and most selfish ends. We have connected with their cause disloyalty, superstition, lust of gain, narrowness of mind, and a hateful union of abject servility and domineering tyranny. 'Those dark times of priestcraft when popes and monks bearded the king, and conspired to keep mankind in slavery both of body and soul'—such is our idea of the days of St Anselm. At the best, the policy of the Church is regarded as mistaken, as an interference with matters beyond her sphere, savouring of worldliness and want of faith. But that the party of Gregory VII and St Anselm was the *religious* one, that they were contending for objects not of this world, that they were the champions of truth and holiness, the reformers of their day, that they were on the *right* side, the side which good men now would have taken in those circumstances, and that the kings and nobles were in the wrong, were cruel and dangerous aggressors—this, we think, many of us find hard to believe, many more even to *fancy*. The notion is too much for their imagination: they can no more master it than they can conceive the French Revolution to have been right.

This state of feeling has come about naturally, as many other things good and evil have come about in our generation, as most of us have ceased to believe in ghost-stories, or suspect old women of witchcraft, or value a priest's blessing. This is not the place to discuss its deep and manifold causes, for we are writing not of the nineteenth century but of the eleventh, of Anselm and his cause not of English national character. But we are anxious that this cause should be judged fairly; and there

are one or two sources of prejudice against it which, while they are manifestly fatal to all true and high views of history, are also so very common and powerful that we cannot refrain from spending a few words on them before proceeding to the main subject of our review.

1. One of these sources of prejudice is the irreligious character of our popular historical traditions and of the literature which embodies and perpetuates them. Men go by tradition in most things, and in none more than in history; and the feelings and even the judgments with which it has prepossessed us often last long after opinion has ceased to support them. We have been brought up in familiar acquaintance with a history which may well have taken a strong hold on our imagination. But in that magnificent line of traditions—the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, a series which for interest and sustained grandeur has no parallel but in the history of Rome—in the imposing picture presented by the unfolding and progress of the fortunes of the state and realm of England we may look in vain for anything of higher stature or diviner mould than what belongs to this world. Our historians speak as they might of a great heathen empire, as if the most august and awful object in history, the Christian Church, deeply involved too as its fortunes have been with those of our own country, had no existence or were but a mere title or abstraction. The theory on which they write recognizes not religion as a standard or motive of public action; it is one which looks not beyond things temporal for greatness or reality, which holds no power entitled to exercise a direct and visible control on society but that of the crown or the constitution—a theory, on which the claim of the Church to speak and be listened to in the councils of kings, and to thwart if need be the policy of nations, is a simple absurdity. It is not too much to say that there is less in the popular history of the Christian kingdom of England which

implies the *reality* of religion—less acknowledgment of the laws and agents of a Divine government, partly concealed and partly manifested, to which the temporal rulers of the world are even here amenable—than in the legends or even the political history of Greece and Rome.

Nor is there much to wonder at in this, considering that our great authorities on the subject of European history have been such as Hume and Robertson. Christians and Churchmen have consented to receive as oracles the dicta of the unbeliever and the cold-hearted *littérateur* on the duties and objects of man and society, and to listen with obsequious patience while they superciliously gave judgment on the temper and relations of the Church and the conduct of her prelates. Their influence, no doubt, is somewhat shaken, yet their view and colouring of things still remain among us as the acknowledged and received one. Their tone of tranquil and deliberate contempt, scarcely disturbed even by bitterness, has become the keynote of the general feeling in England about Churchmen and their cause. They have reconciled us to the belief that in the earlier times of modern history, those ages of reality, of young and exuberant life, there were nothing but hollow forms, sickening hypocrisies, uncouth and unmeaning technicalities; and taught us to measure purposes which stirred all Christendom as one man by the formulæ of an impertinent and shallow philosophy—the hopes of saints by the selfishness of fashionable society. It speaks ill for the character of any age when such writers could gain and keep the ascendant in history, ill for its genuineness of feeling, ill for its Christianity. The influence which Hume had on the public was given by the public, which had long been ready for him, and felt as he did. Indeed, between him and his predecessors in English history there is not much to choose in their way of viewing ecclesiastical matters. He was an unbeliever, and they professed to be

Christians; but there is in both the same ignorant contempt for what they call the dark ages, the same sneers at 'superstition' and 'priestcraft', the same invariable leaning to the worldly side, however undeniably bad its show and worthless its supporters, the same inability to conceive of any higher motives in the clergy than selfishness and ambition, the same insensibility to nobleness and height of character in them, however obvious. Nay, we may see the same spirit at work in deeper and more manly writers than the 'polite and ingenious' of our Augustan age. Account for it as we may, ever since the Reformation the feeling of our most Catholic writers, whenever they are led across the great contests of our early history, is for the most part on the side of the King and the State against the Church. The world has brought them to believe that in these struggles it was always the injured, if not the oppressed, party, and an unequal match for the craft of its antagonist; it has insulted religion and blackened the memory of its defenders, and then called upon Christians to admire and honour its policy; and Christians have been weak and faithless enough to allow themselves for its sake to be estranged from their fathers and fellow-champions in the faith, and have even rivalled it in its bitterness against them.

Nowhere does this low morality and dislike of the Church appear more offensively and more mischievously than in those books from which we first learn history, and which may be taken as fair exponents of popular notions upon the subject. The household traditions of England are now to be found, not in ballads and chronicles, but in the assemblage of unpretending little volumes which we see advertised in the school catalogues of Messrs. Whittaker and Simpkin & Marshall, and some of which are to be met with in most nurseries and juvenile libraries in the United Kingdom. We have all of us been once familiar with them—a series of small books, none

of them aspiring beyond 12mo., and bound in a sort of official livery, blue, red, and green, or brown sheep with blue edges; prim and starched little skeleton compilations, the very essence of propriety and dryness, carefully starving as far as they can all appetite for the grand or poetical or romantic, and with all the decided conciseness, infallibility, and philosophical absence of feeling, of a statistical report or treatise on political economy. These manuals of the 'Textus receptus' of English history give a view of their subject more remarkable for its uniformity than its consistency. For though they all fix on the same great men, the same good and bad kings, the same patriots and traitors, they are not nice as to principles; loyalty and disloyalty, republicanism and high monarchical views, are each, in their turn, grounds both of praise and censure: just as Locke and Venerable Bede, Milton and Hooker, King Alfred and William III, find themselves in company in a 'Temple of British Worthies'. But, with all their anomalies, these books follow one rule at least steadily and intelligently: they invariably take part with the political power, whatever it be, against the Church. In the contests between the ecclesiastical and civil powers, at whatever period, we are taught when children to take it for granted that all right and wisdom lay with the latter; to look upon all leading Churchmen with aversion, and to doubt systematically in them alone purity of motive or reasonableness of purpose. Sympathy and admiration are claimed for political greatness or successful soldiership; for Christian faith and magnanimity and self-devotion it is well if there is not a sneer. And these bad prejudices, which we thus drink in almost with our mother's milk, colour our view, even in spite of ourselves, of the ecclesiastical questions of past history.

2. And our indifference or aversion to the cause of the Church in the Middle Ages is fostered by the strangely unreal notions which are afloat on the

subject of ecclesiastical history, notions which have arisen not merely from an inability to alter our focus of vision, in order to contemplate what is both very distant, and set to a different scale of greatness from our own, but from a most baseless and fantastic idea of what was to be looked for beforehand in Church history. Many persons seem to think that they had a right to find it all along a fair and calm picture of holiness and purity; there should be no disturbances, no troubles, no quarrels about lands and rights—nothing but meekness and peace, at least within. Not of course that there should be no suffering or difficulties, but they ought to be of the clearly heroic kind. Martyrdom and confession plainly add to the interest of any history; martyrs and confessors of course there ought to be; but then they ought to be abstract ones, without anything of commonplace real human nature about them. And the rest of the history ought to be made up solely of the angelic virtues and high deeds of saints, the beautiful lives and sayings of heavenly-minded teachers, the calm unobtrusive dutifulness, the fervent piety, and unwearied zeal, of the flock at large. Such, to judge from the way in which we often hear Church history spoken of *as it has been*, would seem to be the common notion of what *it ought to have been* in order to be worth anything for a Christian of our day to study heartily and with interest.

Now it is a light thing to assure such theorists that in the most despised periods of ecclesiastical history they will find abundance, if they will take the trouble to search for it, to satisfy their demands for religion, all but disengaged from the world. But they must not lay it down as a canon that nothing can be religious except what is, as it were, disembodied and exhibited apart from the realities of life as we see it, that the highest principles and most saintly feelings cannot be at work in the business of the court or the market-place. For it is not, for the

most part, according to the existing order of things to find qualities or elements in an unmixed state; if we want them in a simple form, we must disengage them by thought and skill for ourselves, or, it may be, they are not to be disengaged at all; if we seek for electricity, for galvanic or magnetic power, we must be content to possess their subtle virtues in Leyden jars, muscles of dead frogs, and bars of iron. When the Church was founded, there was no new world created as a stage for Christians to act upon. They were still to be men, each with a different face and figure and character, living a certain number of years, every year made up of a certain number of days and seconds, of which each was to have its own object, feeling, and thought —a countless number, and of an infinite variety— to tempt, or soothe, or guide, or harass. Life was with them to be no poetical dream, but, in its main circumstances and conditions exactly as commonplace, as real, as long, as each of us finds it. Their Christian principles were not to be like propositions of Euclid or legal formulæ, things to be thought of by themselves and paraded on certain occasions; but they were to work *in* and *under* the every-day realities of life, high and low; to hide themselves in all feelings and actions, to possess and inform character, to leaven insensibly whatever stirs and warms men's hearts. They were not meant for a gala robe but for a working-day dress, and that for no fancy labour, but for the rough and dusty encounters of this (outwardly) very matter-of-fact and unromantic world.

Yet people seem to forget these truisms when they come to study Church history. They forget also that the Bible history itself had its *outside* face, not very different in appearance from what they object to in ecclesiastical history; only in one we are brought within the veil of Providence, and are excluded for the most part in the other.

It is therefore really no great wonder that from first

to last, Church history, like all other history of man, presents a series of conflicts—conflicts between real men, carried on as contests are carried on now, with much in them that is bad, much that is ambiguous, and difficult to disentangle and explain, much that is merely practical and very unpoetical, and what some call very unspiritual. That is to say, men were in earnest; they did not play at controversy; they carried on no paper-war with imaginary and harmless antagonists, but a keen struggle with living opponents, who felt as strong an interest in the events as themselves; and the strife was accompanied, as all real strifes are, with excitement and pain, with trouble, risk, and anxious uncertainty.

Yet the very reality and earnestness of these controversies seem in our eyes a sufficient reason for not considering them of importance or interest; and this is especially the case with respect to the history of the Church of the Middle Ages, which we in England seem scarcely to consider religious history at all. Even the theological student neglects it: in his course of Church history he reads down to the end of the fourth or fifth century, and then with a huge bound passes over ten centuries, and begins again with the sixteenth. And the implied reason of this remarkable proceeding is that in those days of wonderful religious energy, when every question was a religious one, the history of the Church was but external and secular. For the controversies of the third and fourth centuries the said student can see reason; for those of the eleventh and twelfth none.

The great controversies of the early Church, and those of the Middle Ages, differed in two points. Those of the first five centuries were for the most part carried on with persons out of the pale of the Church, and on points of faith and doctrine; those of the Middle Ages were mainly connected with life and morals, and were with men who knew no

spiritual authority but hers. Her first opponents, quarrelling with her as a teacher of religion, broke off from her, and set up parallel and antagonistic systems of their own; they were heretics and schismatics, self-condemned, and clearly marked out as such by their own formal and deliberate acts: there was no mistaking the grounds or the importance of the dispute. But in the eleventh century these heresies were things of a past age in the West—lifeless and inoperative carcasses of old enemies, from whom the Church had little, comparatively, to fear for the present. She had living antagonists to cope with, but they were of a different sort. They were no longer the sophist and declaimer of the schools, but mail-clad barons. Just as she had subdued the intelligence and refinement of the old Roman empire, it was swept away, and she was left alone with its wild destroyers. Her commission was changed; she had now to tame and rule the barbarians. But upon them the voice which had rebuked the heretic fell powerless. While they pressed into her fold, they overwhelmed all her efforts to reclaim them, and filled her from east to west with violence and stunning disorder. When, therefore, she again roused herself to confront the world, her position and difficulties had shifted. Her enemy was no longer heresy, but vice—wickedness, which wrought with a high hand, foul and rampant like that of Sodom or the men before the Flood. It was not the Faith, but the first principles of duty—justice, mercy, and truth—which were directly endangered by the unbridled ambition and licentiousness of the feudal aristocracy, who were then masters of Europe. These proud and resolute men were no enemy out of doors; they were within her pale, professed allegiance to her and to be her protectors; claimed and exercised important rights in her government and internal arrangements, plausible in their origin, strengthened by prescription, daily placed further out of the reach of attack by ever-extending encroach-

ments, and guarded with the jealousy of men who felt that the restraints of Church discipline, if ever they closed round them, would be fetters of iron. And with this fierce nobility she had to fight the battle of the poor and weak; to settle the question whether Christian religion and the offices of the Church were to be anything more than names, and honours, and endowments, trappings of chivalry and gentle blood; whether there were yet strength left upon earth to maintain and avenge the laws of God, whoever might break them. She had to stand between the oppressor and his prey; to compel respect for what is pure and sacred from the lawless and powerful.

The various forms which this great struggle took touched as truly the reality and permanence of religion as any of the earlier controversies with heresy. But its nature made it at the time, and makes it still, a difficult one. For a great practical controversy like the present—whether the feudal or the ecclesiastical, the military or the religious, principle should have its rightful predominance in European society, though as real in its grounds as that former contest which the Church waged against worldliness in the form of heresy—is less capable of being presented in a definite and clearly limited form, with all its due oppositions and distinctions, its complete detail of feature and circumstance, than a dogmatic controversy. Such a scene of conflict must from the number of extraneous elements mixed up in it present an appearance of vagueness or at least confusion; it must have many sides, and so be difficult to take in at once; it must be full of occasions for mistake and error both for actors and spectators. For in such a case the great principles in debate are scarcely ever presented in a pure and unembarrassed form; the contest is carried on not by opposing statements and arguments, but, so to speak, by *moves*, the meaning and effect of which are not always obvious even to him who

makes them; which harmonize with and involve principles, but which do not necessarily disclose them. It is put upon issues, and battled upon points, which are often of disproportionately small importance to the real question which is felt to turn on them. The great interests at stake appear but accidentally on the face of the dispute; and we wonder at the eagerness and zeal which the ostensible objects of the contest call forth, till we come to see, as the combatants saw, that, trifling as they may be, they are from the force of circumstances the key of a whole position. Such a contest, moreover, *must* appear personal; for, the real causes of dispute lying out of sight and being represented not so much by words as by the character and deeds of men, and further the different sides not being marked off by plain and broad lines and the combatants being intermixed, we are tempted to see nothing but individual interests and aims in cases where in reality a great cause has been fought for, and lost or won. We contemplate only Henry and Gregory, their policy, their errors, and their success as men, and put out of sight the worldly or spiritual power which stood or fell with them. And further, where all parties have, or claim, specific rights in a common society, with some legitimate, some prescriptive or held by sufferance, some in abeyance—rights between Christian and Christian, clerk and layman, bishop and lord, rights possibly ill-defined and ill-adjusted—the conflict could be carried on for a long time without apparently touching those deeper and more real grounds of opposition which lay beneath; and, instead of a controversy about the most active principles and most vital interests of society, it would present outwardly the appearance of a series of technical and legal questions [1].

[1] Our remarks scarcely need illustration: but we are tempted to refer by way of instance, to the struggle now going on in Lower Canada between the English and French population (v. *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1842). The English are pouring in upon

We shall now proceed with our main subject, and endeavour to give in some detail one of the scenes in this contest as it was viewed from the side of the Church, and by persons who had it before their eyes and were engaged in it, taking from their own mouths what they believed and meant, what were their objects, how they felt, and what they hoped for. It is obviously as vain to expect to gain in any other way a real view of their position as it would be to look for a fair account of the stand lately made in defence of Church property from a liberal who hates everything ecclesiastical. Our position towards those times ought not to be an external one; we ought to look at them neither as advocates nor as mere critics, but as Churchmen. And indeed it is high time to do so if we wish posterity to do justice to our own motives in resisting Church spoliation. We too are embarked in the same cause, and we certainly have not more to show than they had, to prove our disinterestedness.

Anselm's time was an era in the history of the English Church; and the transactions in which he was engaged are rendered yet more interesting by his personal character. For we must not forget that the great champion of ecclesiastical liberty was also the profoundest and most original writer that had appeared in the Latin Church since St Augustine; or that he was the great model in his

the French holders of the soil, endeavouring to establish themselves, and to get the land into their own hands. The French feel that their religion, their language, their habits and ways of life—all that is dear to them, and has hitherto made them happy, must be swept away if their rough and enterprising neighbours, who have but small sympathy with them, should by dint of greater capital gain their footing. With the French the effort to keep the English out is a struggle for existence. Now the great obstacle to the English purchaser is the cumbrous and intricate system of French law to which property in Lower Canada is subject; and it is on the minutiæ and technicalities of this law that the battle is fought between the two races.

time of high Christian character, in its most winning and graceful as well as in its severest aspect. Yet his history has never been treated, at least in England, with the special attention it deserves. Except in the heavy pages of Collier, we know not where the English reader would find a full account of him. The work which originally suggested these remarks was the first attempt to supply the deficiency, a translation of a posthumous essay of Dr Möhler by Mr Rymer. Dr Möhler's object was to draw attention to what really was the state of religion and thought in the times of the great struggle between the Church and the Empire, and to exhibit the 'moral, ecclesiastical, and literary life' of the period in the history of its greatest and most complete representative. It was the work of one who thoroughly appreciated Anselm and his times; but it is much to be regretted that, coming from a man who viewed his subject so thoughtfully and with so clear and steady an eye, it should have appeared in so very unattractive a form. It could scarcely have been intended for publication as it stands. As a composition it is loose and rambling; too discursive for a history, and without arrangement enough for a dissertation. Important views suggested by the course of the story are continually breaking its thread by the length to which they are pursued; yet they are never distinctly worked out. The narrative is spiritless and flat in a history which has interest enough for a romance, and there is throughout a carelessness in statements of fact which is unaccountable in one who evidently had his authorities before him. Nor were the defects of the original supplied in the translation. The most careful part of the work is the essay at the end on the 'Scholastic Philosophy of St Anselm'.

The contemporary materials for a life of Anselm are unusually full and interesting. He held correspondence with persons in every part of Europe, and even in Asia, and in every vocation and grade

of society; and of this correspondence, which brings out in a most striking manner his character and objects, a large portion is preserved, extending over part of his private and almost the whole of his public life. Further, we have two singularly interesting and graphic accounts of his public and private life by an eye-witness, Eadmer, an English monk of Canterbury, who was his companion and most intimate friend all through his troubles and exile and was afterwards Archbishop of St Andrews, a man of sense and great observation, somewhat disposed to gossip, but remarkably simple and natural in his accounts, and apparently quite entitled to the deference which has always been paid to his authority. He wrote under the eye and correction of the archbishop[1]; and his account is borne out, and referred to, by his contemporaries, Ordericus Vitalis, who wrote in Normandy, and William of Malmesbury, whose work was dedicated to a son of Henry I (one of Anselm's opponents). Such are our main sources of information.

The two contests in which Anselm was successively engaged with William Rufus and Henry I are sufficiently distinct to be considered separately. His antagonist in the first was the lawless violence of feudalism, in the second its craft and unscrupulous intrigue. The grounds, too, of the dispute, which in the first appear in a vague and general form, were brought to a distinct question in the second. These two contests will form the subjects, respectively, of the present, and the following essay.

To understand what these struggles really meant and involved, we must keep before our eyes throughout that idea of the Church—of its nature and position in the world—which men in those days had received from their fathers, and took for granted, supposing that they saw it in every line of Scripture.

The Church as set up by the Apostles was an organized society, destined to pursue *in* the world

[1] Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, ii, 182, 183.

objects beyond the world, with laws and a polity not of man's ordering, governed by powers delegated indeed *to* men but not *from* men. It was a *real* and *visible kingdom*, distinct from the kingdoms of this world and independent of them, as well when embracing as when confronting them, with objects and ends, over all earthly ones, paramount. With these unearthly ends, or with the powers granted to the Church to carry them out, by her invisible yet ever-present King, the powers of this world can never innocently interfere. However the Church's essential nature may be obscured by the sin of her members, yet, while she exists, her rights and claims must be indefeasible; for they are truly *His* 'to whom the heathen have been given for His inheritance'. Princes of the earth—whatever may have been yielded to them for honour's sake or convenience, may have been usurped by wrong, inherited or acquired by usage, betrayed by cowardice, or sold by worldliness—can never gain *rights* over the Church in her own province, *rights* to set aside her laws, to wield her powers or alter her objects, for these laws, powers, and objects are beyond the sphere to which earthly power can as such extend. Many things—policy, compacts, justice—may prevent the Church at any particular moment from reclaiming what is her own; but forfeit it finally to the State she cannot. The convenience of time may not set itself in competition with the claims of what is eternal.

Further, this Church, as it was not of the earth, knew no distinctions—no essential ones at least—of rank or country. Giving honour where honour was due, it did so only in subordination to its own fundamental laws. Two of those laws were unity and purity. Be men what they might, they were to be made *one* in the Church, and in her to remain *one*. Be they what they might, if they openly and deliberately committed sin, they were without respect of persons to be punished by her. To the Apostles

had power been given by our Lord to punish and pardon, to engraft and cut off; by them had this power been passed on to others, who transmitted it in their turn; and, besides these, other rightful judges and rulers in the kingdom of God and its concerns there were none.

Every one knows how the kingdom of God continued separate in its outward position till the kingdoms of the world broke before it and it stood in the midst of the wreck of the Roman empire the one great object of deep interest and awe to all men, conquerors and conquered, Greek and Latin, German and Lombard, Frank and Goth. The princes of the nations and their multitudes were forced to bow before its majesty and become its subjects. But then came trouble. They would be in *it* what they were in their own earthly kingdoms: honoured in its pale as kings, they found it hard to be in any sense subjects. Those times, which it is the fashion to represent as the era of ecclesiastical usurpation, will, as we have already said, be found to have been periods of systematic and unceasing encroachment on the rights of the Church by the lay powers. The Gospel Law had come to be acknowledged as the one ruling principle in Europe; and therefore of course the Church had power and that which comes with power: her princes sat in high places; she had her broad lands and her palaces, her honours and royalties. But she held all this in the face of a world which grudged, the moment it had given. Oppression, fraud, or compromise were continually at work, abridging her apostolic rights, and confounding them, in order to weaken them, with those of a merely temporal origin and reference; step by step effacing her independent and unearthly character, and bidding fair to dispense altogether with her divinely-imposed laws of unity and holiness.

At length the intolerable license which reigned through the Church, and the utter powerlessness of her rulers to check it, in the pass to which things

had come produced, as we know, the great reaction and reform of the eleventh century—a reaction which, whatever means it may have used or whatever other effects it may have produced, humanly speaking saved Christianity itself in the West. Its leaders boldly reverted to the ancient truths of the Church's intrinsic independence and the divine origin and really unearthly nature of her powers; and, keeping their eyes steadily on these, they risked a conflict with the armed might of Europe. Their cause rested on the following points:

1. That the Church is not only the appointed witness of the faith but also the guardian of holiness and justice in the world, and is as much bound to act on the offensive and to make sacrifices in behalf of the latter as of the former.

2. That the rebuke of John the Baptist to Herod is a precedent for Christian bishops in dealing with the great of the earth, whose rank ought no more to exempt *them* than the lowest from the rebukes and punishments of the Church.

3. That the powers of the Church, as they were not *of men* ought not to be *holden* of men; that her rebukes and punishments, as they are no part of earthly power ought neither to be directed nor held back by that power; and that the only way of escaping this interference in any degree was by securing to the Church that independence which her Lord had left her. Hence it was that the questions of simony and lay investiture became so prominent.

To restore strength and efficiency to the Church by establishing and applying these principles in their various details was the work to which the religious party of St Anselm's day thought themselves called; and they set about it bravely and like men. The world has seldom seen such depth and unity of character; we may call it one-sided, but it was one-sidedness which pursued its noble and Christian enterprise with a steadiness of aim, with a breadth and grandeur of plan, with an inflexible earnestness,

with a completeness of execution, in comparison of which our efforts to do good seem often but of mixed purpose and uncertain fulfilment. And of this great party in its various aspects—social, political, intellectual, and religious—the foremost and most perfect representative was Anselm.

'When the storms from without' (we quote Dr Möhler) 'had been laid, then commenced in the Church the happy struggle for regeneration. Anselm was one of the first who entered into this conflict with prudence and with firmness, and of few can it be said that they exercised so universal an influence. The great exertions of his age had only one internal profound motive: to this unity of object they must all be referred, else they would all and each be without a real signification. But when we have considered this one and true spring of action, we see that it divides itself into various manifestations, of which each called into life a particular power, a distinct talent of the human mind. It was only during the entire period that it was fully developed. The entire body of the contemporaries of Anselm displayed it in its whole, but he united in himself so many talents and powers that in every regard he represented the whole in which so many formed a part. This whole, divided into a multiplicity of manifestations, was the religious enthusiasm, the renewed yearning after divine and eternal things, which had been so long stifled in the miseries and melancholy woes of the times. The flame of religion struggled for freedom, and in the glow which it produced, the chains by which the human mind had been held captive melted away'.—*Introd.* pp. ix–x.

Their contest with the civil powers was but one part of their vast and connected movement, but it was an integral part of it. For the real point at issue between the rulers of the Church and the feudal princes of Europe, at the period of which we are speaking, was whether the Gospel law was in very deed to be considered the supreme law of the Church and of every member of it, or whether on the other hand Christians, when entrusted by God with the temporal government of their fellow-Christians, acquired thereby a certain right of exemption from the obedience to the Christian law to which their brethren were bound and a control

over the powers and sanctions by which that obedience was to be enforced. The existence of such a law, binding on the whole body politic (for all were members of the one Catholic Church), and the abstract rights and powers of those persons in whom the administration of that law was vested, were not denied. But there was another law, of military obedience and service, which the new population of Europe had brought with them from their forests, and which was strongly and deeply fixed in their minds; and the question was whether this was not a check or even bar to the Church's law; whether the powers of the Christian dispensation, the *reality* of which no one then questioned, were not by this antagonist law to be controlled and fenced off; whether the obedience and fealty due to a fuedal superior—ties which were certainly felt to be of a most stringent kind—were not to dispense or debar a clergyman from doing what otherwise would be his clear and undoubted duty, as standing in the place of the Apostles, towards those who professed to be disciples of the Apostles.

This struggle did not begin in England till the time of Anselm. For, though the Church policy of William the Conqueror was in theory perhaps the most tyrannical of any in Europe, its evils were practically kept in check by the personal characters of the king and the archbishop, Lanfranc, men very similar in temper—severe, earnest, and practical—each the other's equal in resolution and ability, and who thoroughly understood and trusted one another. William seconded heartily Lanfranc's measures to restore discipline and learning in the English Church—he had political as well as other reasons for doing so; and Lanfranc, though in his reforms determined and unyielding even to the king, studiously kept aloof from the party and policy of Gregory VII. By a sort of tacit compromise, no point seems ever to have been raised between the two which might open the great questions at issue

on the continent. In their day these questions remained in abeyance.

The Conqueror's church policy, which, as we have said, certainly had in part for its object to promote vigour, regularity, and strictness in the Church, is marked by two main features. One is the disposition to give and guarantee to the Church within certain limits a separate and independent jurisdiction. In the important Council, or rather Parliament, of Lillebonne, 1080, this was done for Normandy[1]. From the floating mass of precedents and customs, definite laws were extricated and fixed in writing, the province of the episcopal courts marked out with tolerable equity, questions about traditionary rights between the feudal and ecclesiastical powers adjusted, and provision made for settling future claims. In the enactments at Lillebonne all offences against the Church and her ministers, all crimes of impurity and irreligion, and all offences committed by persons in holy orders, were reserved for the judgment of the bishop. In England the same disposition to recognize and guard the jurisdiction of the Church appears in the separation of the bishop's court from the secular court of the hundred, and the distinct and clear admission of the independence of that law by which the bishop was to judge. The king's mandate[2], by virtue of which this separation was to take place, expresses a strong desire for the restoration of Church laws to their purity and force, and secures their exercise from the secular interference to which it had hitherto been subject. And the frequent councils held during William's reign prove that he meant what he said.

But, if William, for a feudal sovereign whose will was law, went out of his way to make the Church more active and powerful than she had been, he did

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, v, 552 *et seq.* (c. 5, ed. Le Prevost).
[2] Wilkins' *Concil.*, i, 368, 369. Thorpe, *Anc. Laws*, i, 495.

so under the full consciousness and with the distinct and jealous assertion of his absolute control over her at the moment. Few points of ecclesiastical supremacy were claimed by Henry VIII which were not also claimed and possessed, though it may be differently used, by Norman William. 'All matters in Church and State', says Eadmer, 'waited on his beck'. He had, in England at least, the absolute nomination of bishops and abbots; and, though his appointments were in general good ones, at least in his later years, he never lost sight of his political interests, and had no scruple in making use of his power of election to keep in order a troublesome city or a refractory Anglo-Saxon monastery[1]. The

[1] See his conversation with his chaplain Samson about the bishopric of Le Mans, Ordericus Vitalis, iv, 531*: see also W. Malms., *Vit. S. Aldhelm* (Wharton, ii. 39). Turold was first appointed Abbot of Glastonbury. 'Idem Turoldus, dum tyrannidem in subjectos ageret, ad Burh (Peterborough) a rege translatus est, abbatiam opulentam, sed quæ tunc a latrunculis, duce quodam Herevardo, infestaretur; quia inter paludes sita erat. "Per splendorem Dei", inquit, "quia magis se agit militem quam abbatem, inveniam ei comparem, qui assultus ejus accipiat."' Abbot Brand, Turold's pre-

* Defuncto Ernaldo Cenomannorum episcopo, Guillelmus rex dixit Samsoni Bajocensi capellano suo: 'Cenomannensis episcopatus sedes suo viduata est antistite, in qua volente Deo te nunc volo subrogare. Cenomannis a canina rabie dicta, urbs est antiqua, et plebs ejus finitimis est procax et sanguinolenta, dominisque suis semper contumax et rebellionis avida. Pontificales igitur habenas tibi tradere decerno, quem a pueritia nutrivi et amavi sedulo, et nunc inter maximos regni mei proceres sublimare desidero.' Samson respondit: 'Secundum apostolicam traditionem oportet episcopum irreprehensibilem esse. Ego autem in omni vita mea sum valde reprehensibilis, omnibusque mentis et corporis ante conspectum deitatis sum pollutus flagitiis, nec tantum decus contingere possum, pro sceleribus meis miser et despicabilis.' Rex dixit: 'Callidus es et perspicaciter vides quod tu rite peccatorem te confiteri debes. Fixam tamen in te statui sententiam, nec a te statutum convellam, quin episcopatum suspicias, aut alium, qui pro te præsul fiat, porrigas.' His auditis gavisus Samson ait: 'Nunc, domine mi rex, optime locutus es, et ad hoc agendum adminiculante Deo me promptum invenies. Ecce in capella tua est quidam pauper clericus, sed nobilis et bene morigeratus. Huic præsulatum commenda in Dei timore, quia dignus est (ut æstimo) tali honore.' Regi autem percunctanti quis esset, Samson respondit: 'Hoellus dicitur et est genere Brito; sed humilis est et revera bonus homo' (c. 11, vol. ii, 248, ed Le Prevost).

practice of investiture, which had come down to him from his Saxon predecessors, assumed under him a new and much more definite meaning when it came to be interpreted by the principles of the feudal law. But the position in which he established himself towards the Church is seen most clearly in three very important *Constitutions* mentioned by Eadmer—no random acts of power, but parts of a systematic and well-understood policy. These 'innovations', as Eadmer calls them, were (1) that no one might recognize a pope in England till the king had ordered him to be acknowledged, or receive letters from him till they had been seen by the king; (2) that the English Church in council assembled under the primate might pass no laws or canons but such as were 'agreeable to his pleasure, and first ordained by him'; (3) that no bishop might implead or punish any of the king's vassals, even for incest, adultery, or any other such great sin, except 'by the king's precept'.[1]

These principles, of which we see the fruit in the following reign, struck at once at the independence and at the legislative and executive power of the Church, and implied her absolute subjection to the feudal law. She was absorbed and incorporated into the feudal system at a time when it was most important that she should stand clear of it, on ground of her own, in evident possession of authority underived from any child of man; protesting against and resisting the injustice and impurity of the world. In William's policy the feudal sovereign was the source of ecclesiastical as of civil authority; as he had his feudatory barons, so he had his feudatory bishops; both invested with their office and dignity by him; both bound to him by the same oath of

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decessor, and his Saxon monks, had refused to acknowledge William, and were in league with Hereward.—*Thierry*, book v, p. 105, Eng. Transl.

[1] Eadm., *Hist. Nov.*, p. 29.

homage. This tie of feudal allegiance and fealty, then the strongest bond between man and man, had been thrown over the rulers of the Church not only as subjects and holders of land but *as bishops;* and by virtue of it the king claimed from them, as of right, *feudal* obedience, without reserve and without appeal, in the discharge of their office as bishops. They were the great Church officers of the crown, appointed to govern the Church for the king, and according to his wisdom and policy to make laws and to execute them, not by their own authority but by his. The last appeal was not to the law of the Gospel, but to the customs and precedents of feudalism. The powers of the Church were surrendered against all but the weak and helpless; and a large body of her members, and those the most licentious and unruly—the mass of the soldiery of the kingdom—were avowedly withdrawn from that control and discipline which she was to exercise at her own discretion and peril without respect of persons.

Such was the condition in which the Conqueror left the Church to his successor. He had carried out his policy without meeting any opposition from the clergy. It is not difficult to understand their acquiescence in it, even on the part of such men as Lanfranc. For good certainly came of it, great and manifest good, in a most wild and lawless time. The strongest arm in England, the only power which could make itself felt in such a break-up of society, was on the whole on their side. Why should they, at such a distance from the scene of conflict between the Church and the Empire on the continent, and moreover so much perplexed[1] by

[1] After the Emperor had set up the Antipope Guibert against Gregory VII at Brixen, Lanfranc could write thus to Cardinal Hugo, who wished to draw England to the Emperor's side. After disapproving of Hugo's bitter language against Gregory, he goes on: 'It is as yet unknown to man, what they (Gregory VII and Guibert) are and will be in God's sight; yet

its events,—with fierce and unscrupulous Norman soldiers to deal with on the one hand, and a jealous Anglo-Saxon population, of whose language they were ignorant on the other—why should they turn it against themselves? Certain it is that the only voice that was raised against William's policy towards the English Church was Guitmund's, a Norman monk, whose name Anselm couples with Lanfranc's in point of reputation in his day [1]. Guitmund refused preferment in England on the ground that William had no right to dispose of the English sees and abbeys against the wishes of the people. 'Search the Scriptures', he said to William, 'and see by what law it is allowed that a pastor elected by their enemies should be placed by force over the Lord's flock? An ecclesiastical election ought first to be honestly made by the faithful themselves who are to be governed; and then, if canonical, confirmed by the assent of fathers and friends; if otherwise, in all charity amended'.[2] But Guitmund's boldness met with no sympathy in England or Normandy.

It was well, perhaps, that the struggle between the English Church and Feudalism did not fall on the days of a king who, by the force of circumstances, bore rule in her hour of greatest helplessness, and who, with all the foresight, political

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I believe that the Emperor would not have ventured on so serious a step without good reason, or have been able to gain so great a victory without great help from God. I do not recommend your coming to England without first having received the King's leave; for our island has not yet disavowed the former (Gregory VII), nor given judgment whether it ought to obey the latter. When we have heard the case on each side, if so it happen, we shall be able to see more clearly what ought to be done.'—Lanfranc, *Ep.* 59. This was in or after 1080, when Gregory had been Pope for seven years.—*Vide* Baron., *ad ann.* 1080, Num. xxiii.

[1] Anselm, *Ep.* i, 16.

[2] Ordericus Vitalis, iv, 542 (c. 8, ed. Le Prevost).

talent, and unscrupulousness of his successors, had an iron firmness of will which no opposition could have turned from its purpose. 'He was a very stark man', says the Saxon Chronicle[1], 'and very savage, so that no man durst do anything against his will. He had earls in his bonds who had done against his will; bishops he set off their bishoprics, abbots off their abbotries, and thanes in prison; and at last he did not spare his own brother Odo. Him he set in prison.' But, as it was, the Church had time to recover during his reign from the weakness and want of tone which prevailed before the Conquest and from the frightful disorders and overthrow which attended it. She had found a protector and favourer in one who might have been her most terrible enemy.

But on the 9th Sept. 1087, the 'famous Baron', who had wrought greater things and caused more misery[2] than any of his fellows in Europe, was 'taken away from human affairs'. He died almost alone. Those whose attendance he most desired, Lanfranc and Anselm, were kept from his death-bed by distance or sickness. When his corpse had been deserted by his children and servants and left without covering on the bare floor, he was indebted for his burial to an obscure country knight who 'for the love of God' brought his body to Caen; and his grave in his own noble Monastery of St Stephen was at the moment of burial forbidden him by a boor from whom he had of old violently taken the ground on which it stood. His friend and coadjutor,

[1] Quoted in Lingard, ii, 68.

[2] 'King William was a very wise man and very rich, more worshipful and strong than any of his foregangers. He was very mild to good men who loved God, and stark beyond all bounds to those who withsaid his will. . . Truly in his time men had mickle suffering, and very many hardships. Castles he caused to be wrought, and poor men to be oppressed. He was so very stark. . . His rich men moaned, and the poor men murmured; but he was so hard, he recked not the hatred of them all'.—*Saxon Chronicle*, in Lingard, ii, 68, 70.

the great archbishop, great not in having founded an empire but reformed a Church, followed him shortly; he had seen but too certainly the troubles that were coming, and left their full weight for his successor.

That successor was Anselm. He was not a man fitted, seemingly, by nature and training for such a lot. Like Lanfranc, he was the son of an Italian noble. He was born at Aosta in Piedmont, where his parents lived in affluence. His mother was a woman of warm and quiet piety; and her lessons early exerted a strong influence on his mind. As a boy he was full of the strange simple faith of childhood; brought up among the Alps, he 'used to fancy that Heaven rested on the mountain-tops'; and, sleeping or waking, his thoughts were ever running on what it held. He soon distinguished himself in the public schools, and showed a strong disposition for the life of the cloister; but his wishes were checked by his father, and gave way at last before his opening prospects of rank and wealth. As he grew up, his love of religion, and even of literature, was damped by the amusements and pursuits of his station. His mother died early in his youth, and then 'the ship of his heart', says his biographer [1], 'having lost its sole anchor, drifted off almost entirely into the waves of the world'. What seemed to await him was the life of coarse and uneasy riot, the authority, importance, and brawls of a village noble—ending, perhaps, in the death of a dog, at the foot of the Alps. But Providence, which had marked out for him so high a destiny, drove him from his home and country by the unappeasable harshness of his father. With one companion he crossed Mont Cenis, and, after three years spent in Burgundy and France, came to Normandy.

At the time of his arrival all nations which spoke the Latin tongue, say the Chronicles, were ringing

[1] Eadmer.

with the fame of the Abbey of Bec, in Normandy, and its Prior Lanfranc. Twenty years before a few cells of the homeliest kind were rising beside a mill, in the wooded valley of the Rille, not far from Rouen. A rude old soldier named Herluin had with some trouble obtained permission of his feudal lord to devote himself and his patrimony to religion; and had retired to this spot with his mother and a few companions, over whom he presided as superior. All day long he was employed in building; most of the night he spent in learning to read, and in getting the Psalter by heart; his mother baked for the monks, washed their clothes, and performed all the menial offices of the house. Herluin was with his own hands building the bakehouse of the monastery when a Lombard stranger applied for and received admission. This was Lanfranc. He was the son of a nobleman at Pavia; eminent there as a lawyer, then an exile, a travelling student, a disappointed teacher—at last, robbed of everything and left penniless by the road-side, he had inquired for the meanest monastic establishment in the neighbourhood, and had been directed to Bec. To raise money for his brethren, who could not even afford oil to burn in their church at night, the Lombard had reluctantly opened a school. He taught as none had taught in Normandy before[1]. The few mean cells grew into a noble abbey, the great light of the West, the rival of Clugny in discipline and its superior in learning. Lanfranc's school was filled with disciples of all nations, of high and low degree, laymen and clerics; among his pupils were some of the most distinguished continental churchmen of the time, Pope Alexander II, Ivo of Chartres, Guitmund of Aversa[2]; and to archbishops and bishops, mainly trained in the cloisters of Bec, the task was shortly to be committed of remoulding and revivifying in England the Church of St Augustine.

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, iv, c. 6 (ii, 210, ed. Le Prevost).
[2] *Gallia Christiana*, xi, 219.

Thither among the throng of students came Anselm, another Lombard wanderer, travelling, according to the fashion of those days, to acquire knowledge. He soon far outstripped his fellow-pupils; and his genius and untiring industry gained him the especial regard of Lanfranc, who employed him to teach under himself. Meanwhile the wish of his boyhood revived for a religious life; but such a step was not to be taken hastily, and long and anxiously did he think about it, and about the best plan of such a life. Should he become a hermit?—or live under rule and vow on his patrimony, dispensing it all for the benefit of the poor?—or enter a monastery? If he entered a monastery, Bec was the most natural place for him; but his unconscious ambition suggested (so he confessed afterwards) that at Bec he would be lost, and be of no use while Lanfranc taught there. Clugny, again, was as strict as Bec, but discouraged learning. At last he put his case unreservedly into the hands of Lanfranc and the Archbishop of Rouen. Under their advice he resolved to devote himself to a monastic life; and at length assumed the habit at Bec.

Three years after his admission the virtual government of the monastery passed into his hands, on his succeeding Lanfranc as prior: and fifteen years later, on the death of Herluin, the simple-hearted and venerable founder, he was elected abbot [1]. Bec lost nothing under his rule of what it had gained under Lanfranc. Very different in character and cast of mind from his great predecessor, he worked in the same cause and with equal earnestness and success. His monastery still continued one of the chief centres of religious and intellectual activity to England, Normandy, and even France, awakening thought, and restoring a practical and strict sense of Christian duty, in their wild and unsettled

[1] Admitted, 1059; prior, 1063; abbot, 1078. *Gall. Christ.*, xi, 223–4.

population, by its own example of holiness and by the numerous pupils which it was continually sending forth from its school. The pursuits to which Lanfranc had given the first impulse by his clear and eloquent lectures and his great erudition Anselm carried forward by his freshness and vigour of thought and his native genius for refined metaphysical speculation. He governed his monastery with skill; no such easy task in days when the abbot had to exercise more personal superintendence and more severity over grown men of all ages than the master of a large school would now venture upon towards his boys. Lanfranc was famous for his powers of government; Anselm, by his clear insight into character, his patience, and firmness, and his winning affectionateness, had as much hold on his monks as Lanfranc had gained by his knowledge of the world and his forcible and commanding character. 'To those in health', says Eadmer, 'Anselm was a father, to the sick a mother'.

He seemed to have found the sphere for which he was intended. In the quiet of his monastery his subtle and active intellect could pursue without interruption that striking line of speculation, full of devotion, though so abstract and methodical, the love of which haunted him like a passion[1], and which began a new era in Latin theology. He had pupils round him whose minds were kindling at his own; and friends to whom he could open his heart with the frankness and warmth which were such strong features of his character—features of which we see so much in his letters, and which would almost have seemed softness, except in one under such stern and strong self-discipline. And further, the presence and society of a large body of men, all of them more or less sincerely engaged in efforts after a religious life, dependent on his care and needing his succour and counsel, gave infinitely varied play to a character peculiarly delicate

[1] Eadmer, *Vit. S. Anselmi*, p. 6.

and skilful in its appreciation and treatment of others. He found also in his monastery what answered to and satisfied his deep feeling of devotion, in those services of unwearied praise and prayer and those opportunities for self-recollection, by which men were permitted in those days to realize in so vivid a manner the Communion of Saints and the presence of the Invisible.

His influence reached far beyond the walls of his cloister. His high and self-devoted religion and his name as a writer and teacher told even upon the world without; and to these he added popular qualities of a singularly engaging kind. His striking reality and simplicity of character, set off by a strong dash of humour, his good sense and considerateness, his graceful condescension to the weak and poor, his gentleness and evenness of temper, veiling such unquestionable seriousness of purpose and sternness towards himself, won upon all hearts, even that of the iron-minded Conqueror. 'When he used to teach or give advice', says Eadmer, 'he was especially careful to be most plain-spoken, avoiding all pomp and generalities, and illustrating his meaning as best he could by any homely or familiar example. All men rejoice at his converse; he gained the love of young and old, of men and women, of rich and poor, and all were glad to minister to him; of so frank and glad a spirit was he to all, and so readily did he enter into their ways, as far as he might without sin. He was the darling of France and Normandy, known and welcome also in England.'[1] After his first visit to England 'there was no earl or countess or great person there who did not think that they had missed favour in the sight of God if they haply had not had an opportunity of rendering some service to Anselm, Aboot of Bec.'[2]

Such was the course to which Anselm seemed to

[1] *Vit. Anselm.*, p. 11. *Hist. Nov.*, p. 33.
[2] *Vit. Anselm.*, p. 11.

be called; to the calm and meditative life of the cloister, where he might influence his generation by his example and writings and by the minds which he formed there; to be the counsellor and doctor of his age, calling forth seriousness around him; to be the father of a great religious brotherhood; and, in the world, to be an example of primitive saintliness, carrying blessing and commanding veneration and love, wherever he appeared.

Anselm was twenty-seven[1] when he finally resolved to 'leave all', and entered for good on what seemed to be his work in life. He had done for ever with the world, with its consolations and joys; as he thought, with its storms also. Thirty-three years of peace were granted him during which he served God and his brethren in gladness of heart, without thought or fear of change. But they were only to be a long respite. The last of them found him still at Bec, an old man, expecting to die there; but in reality with the great work and trial of his life not yet begun nor looked for.

In the year 1092 William Rufus had been four years on the throne, and had let loose feudalism in all its lawlessness upon England. The hearty frankness, high spirit, and generosity of his youth had degenerated, especially since the death of Lanfranc, from whom he had received his education and knighthood[2], into a brutal passion for the wildest debauchery and a savage impatience of every kind of restraint. Not that even now he was without the remains of what might have been a fine character; gleams of nobleness and generosity broke out at times in the midst of his boisterous orgies and his fiercest bursts of rage. In his rough and cruel merriment he did not want for humour, which seems even sometimes to have been a veil under which he expressed self-reproach. But he was frantic with his excessive power. 'The truth must be told', is

[1] *Gall. Christ.*, xi, 223.
[2] Will. Malmsb., 1, iv, § 305.

the reluctant avowal of William of Malmsbury, who can scarcely help making him a hero, and who would be inclined to think, 'if our Christianity allowed' the doctrine of metempsychosis, that the soul of Julius Cæsar had reappeared in William— 'the truth must be told; he feared God very little, and men not at all'.[1]

His government was a full-blown specimen of that worldly and cruel system which was in various ways endeavouring to undermine the power which Christianity still maintained over society; a government which, while it allowed any amount of wickedness and oppression among the powerful—the barons and their dependents—repressed with a strong hand and unsparing severity any breach of the 'king's peace' among the poor and weak. 'William', says Ordericus[2], a contemporary, 'took great delight in military distinctions, and showed their possessors much favour for worldly pomp's sake. He took no care to defend the country-people against the soldiers, and suffered their property to be laid waste with impunity by his retainers and armed followers. He was of a strong memory and ardent will, both to good and to evil. . . He was terrible in his vengeance against thieves and petty robbers, and with a high hand enforced unbroken peace throughout all his dominions; all the inhabitants of his realm he either won over by his bounty, or kept down by his valour and terror, so that no one dared to mutter a word against him.' Appeal to the Church was vain; William, who openly and avowedly hated religion, trampled upon her, and plundered her to support his profuse expenditure, which was on the same wild scale as everything else in his character. The higher clergy suffered, and heard the groans of the poor and defenceless in silence. However some of the best of them may have been ashamed of their feebleness, they all feared to measure their strength

[1] Will. Malmsb., iv, § 320, 312.

[2] Ordericus Vitâlis, viii, 680 (c. 8, iii, 315, ed. Le Prevost).

with so rough an antagonist, and commit themselves to an untried and perilous struggle in which even the highest and most undaunted faith could scarcely hope to be allowed to witness its own victory.

William therefore proceeded to treat Church property and offices as his own. In his father's time the revenues which accrued to a see or abbey during a vacancy were handed over in full to the next holder; the appointment to the offices, though almost always made by the crown, was yet looked on as a trust. But William Rufus asserted the king's full and exclusive right of property in every possession of the Church, and he acted systematically on this claim. As soon as a church became vacant, a king's commissioner went down and took possession, and it was either disposed of to the highest bidder for the king's profit, or kept vacant altogether, the revenue going meanwhile to the Exchequer [1]. Church benefices were treated as if they were simply royal domains, to be granted or withheld at the king's pleasure.

It is not however to William alone that the credit of these proceedings is due. The man whose influence was supreme in England during most of his reign, and who was the contriver and agent of these and other financial measures of the same sort, was a low-born Norman ecclesiastic, named Ralph Passaflabere, or, as he was surnamed, Flambard, the Firebrand—a personage whom his contemporaries seemed to have looked at with a mixture of horror, indignation, and amusement. What Cleon was to the Athenian democracy Ralph Flambard was to the feudal king. By his talent for coarse and boisterous jokes and his noisy and unfailing merriment he had become William's chief boon-companion; but the

[1] 'Videres insuper quotidie, spretâ servorum Dei religione, quosque nefandissimos hominum regias pecunias exigentes per claustra monasterii torvo et minaci vultu procedere, hinc inde præcipere, minas intentare, dominationem potentiamque suam in immensum ostentare.'—Eadm., *Hist. Nov.*, p. 34.

king soon found in him a servant as fierce-tempered, unscrupulous, and fearless as himself and possessed of far superior talents for intrigue and legal chicane. Impudent, cunning, and ready, with a tongue which nothing could silence and activity and resolution which set at naught all opposition, he simply laid himself out to enrich his master. He was placed at the head of the Exchequer, and rose to be Justiciary of England and Bishop of Durham. In those high offices no class was secure from him, and he cared as little for the hatred of the Court as he did for the curses of the poor. Among William's proud barons the upstart cleric was prouder and more overbearing than they; and his address, boldness, and good-fortune carried him safe through their plots against him[1]. Even after William's death, in spite of the universal detestation in which he was held, in spite of Henry's personal hatred of him and the part he had taken against Henry, in spite of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope, he contrived to retain his bishopric till his death; and, when confined to it, his restlessness and uncontrollable energy found a vent in great works for the defence of his principality and the adornment of his cathedral[2]. He carried out his plans against the Church with heart and spirit: 'I robbed the Church, and overbore her customs' said he, many years after, when laid a dying penitent before the high altar of Durham; 'I did all this not from stress of poverty but from wanton lust of gain. My wish to do mischief was greater than my power.' Into this man's hands, as king's commissioner, had the see of Canterbury fallen, since the death of Lanfranc, and, in spite of every remonstrance, William refused to fill it. Men looked on indignantly—bishops, barons, and people, for mixed or

[1] Monach. Dunelm., in Wharton, i, 706–8.

[2] 'Taliter impulsu quodam impatiente otii, de opere transibat ad opus, nil reputans factum, nisi factis nova jam facienda succederent.'—Monachus Dunelm., in Wharton, i, 708.

different reasons—at this new and unheard of injury; to see the 'mother church of all England' lying in widowhood, the sacred throne of St Austin, 'the stay of Christian religion in the realm', under the feet of Ralph Flambard.

Such was the state of things in England when, at the earnest request of Hugh le Loup, Earl of Chester, one of the most powerful and magnificent of the Conqueror's barons, Anselm crossed from Normandy. The earl was a specimen—and a favourable one—of that wild and terrible aristocracy at whose mercy the Church found herself, and whom she had to reclaim or combat. He was entrusted with the defence of the western frontier against the Welsh, and he well maintained the name of the Norman sword by his fierceness and cruelty. A keen and tried soldier, bred up from his youth in bodily exercises and in the midst of danger and license, lawless and undisciplined, yet generous, with arms in his hands, and absolutely uncontrolled by law, opinion, or force, he was what might be expected from such a training—heedless of anything but his caprice, self-indulgence, or amusement, and reckless of the means by which he compassed them; hearty, jovial, and open-handed among his boisterous followers, quickly irritated, and utterly careless about life and suffering; yet not without a wild nobleness and freedom of character, and a rude and imperfect faith.

'He was a lover of the world and its pomps', says his contemporary Ordericus [1], 'and accounted them the highest portion of human bliss; he loved sports and luxuries—jesters, horses, and dogs. He used daily to ride over and lay waste his own lands, caring less for priests and husbandmen than for fowlers and huntsmen. He pampered his appetite till he became so corpulent that he could scarcely walk; he cared not what he gave away nor what he

[1] Ordericus Vitalis, pp. 598, 522 (l. vi, 2, p. 4. l. iv, 7, p. 219, ed. Le Prevost).

took. He was always surrounded with an enormous company of retainers, and his hall was ever in an uproar with a numerous and noisy crew of boys of high and low degree. He entertained also a great number of honourable clerks and knights, whom he delighted to have about him, to share his labours as well as his riches.'

The chaplain of this rough baronial court, a priest named Gerold, whom Hugh had brought with him from Avranches, presented a strange contrast of high saintliness and devotion in the midst of the turbulence and licentiousness of the household where he ministered. Yet he was not without influence and weight in it; and many, we are told, listened with attention to the histories of the holy warriors in the Old Testament, and the legends of the martyr-soldiers of the Church—St George and St Sebastian, St Maurice the leader of the Thebæan legion, St Eustace and St William—by which he endeavoured to reclaim his rude hearers to seriousness and self-restraint.

The Earl of Chester was, in his way, a patron and friend of religious men. He had an old-standing friendship with Anselm, and there can be little doubt that it was with the view of procuring his election to the primacy that he sent for him to England, to superintend—so he said—a new monastery which he had just founded in his county. Such certainly was the talk of the day; and Anselm had such misgivings on the subject that he at first positively refused to go; and it was not till Earl Hugh, who had meanwhile been attacked with a dangerous sickness and earnestly besought his counsels in the hour of need, had pledged himself on his honour that the reports about Anselm's intended promotion were unfounded that he was induced to visit England. He was received with honour by the king and the court; at Canterbury, the clergy and people met him with enthusiastic welcome as their future archbishop; but he immediately left

the town, and nothing more was said or done for the present to make him expect the primacy. Yet, when he had accomplished the immediate objects of his visit, he found himself still detained, and the king refused his permission for him to return to Normandy.

It is not easy to understand William's motives for detaining Anselm. Whatever might have been the wishes of the court, he certainly had no present intention of filling up the archbishopric. When Anselm's holiness was praised in his presence, and the speaker remarked that 'the Abbot of Bec had no wishes for anything earthly', William added scoffingly, 'No, not even for the archbishopric'; 'but[1] by the Holy Face of Lucca', he continued fiercely, 'other archbishop besides me there shall be none.'

He had occasion, however, soon after to change his mind. When he kept his court at Gloucester, at Christmas 1092, his great men had petitioned, 'that at least he would give leave that prayers should be offered up throughout England that God would be pleased to put it into the king's heart to institute a worthy pastor to the church of Canterbury.' William, though highly offended at the petition, granted it. 'Let the Church ask what she pleases', he said, 'I shall not cease to work my will.'

Shortly after this he sickened; his danger became imminent; in a moment of remorse and terror he was induced, among other acts of penitence and amendment, to fill up the archbishopric; and he nominated Anselm.

With our modern notions about preferment we can scarcely enter into the scene that followed, when the moment of trial which Anselm had for

[1] '*Per Sanctum Vultum de Luca*'—his usual oath. The 'Holy Face' was a wooden image of our Lord—*Vide* Will. Malmsb., ed. Hardy, p. 499 (note). It is still exposed on certain festivals at Lucca.

some time foreseen, without the power of escaping from it, was at length arrived, and he saw himself, after a life of quiet, on the point of being cast forth in his old age to buffet with the storms of the world —in those days a wild and rough one. Many years before this, when only Prior of Bec and complaining of his inadequacy for his office, Maurilius, Archbishop of Rouen, had forewarned him that he must expect to be called to yet heavier burdens, and had solemnly charged him on his 'holy obedience' not to refuse them. In compliance with this command he had become abbot. But he was now summoned to be the restorer of the English Church, and the colleague of William Rufus in its government[1]; to make head against a state of things which the English bishops, frightfully evil as many of them felt it to be, had not the heart to resist. He grew pale and trembled when he heard the acclamations which announced the king's election. When the bishops came to lead him to the king, to receive investiture, he refused to go: 'he was too old', he said, 'and knew nothing of business; and, further, his allegiance, his canonical obedience, his counsel and services, were already vowed to others.' He was dragged into the king's sick chamber. William, hard man as he was, was moved even to tears: but his bitter entreaties to Anselm to save him from dying in the guilt of sacrilege with the archbishopric still in his hands, and the angry remonstrances of the bystanders that Anselm was troubling the king's dying hours and betraying the cause of the Church, were all in vain. Anselm refused to receive the archbishopric. 'Might it have been the will of God', said he afterwards of those moments, 'I would gladly have died on the

[1] 'Aratrum Ecclesiam perpendite. Hoc aratrum in Anglia duo boves cæteris præcellentes regendo trahunt, et trahendo regunt, Rex videlicet, et Archiepiscopus Cantuariensis: iste sæculari justitia et imperio, ille divina doctrina et magisterio'. —Anselm's address to the Bishops and Nobles at Gloucester; in Eadm., *Hist. Nov.*, p. 36.

spot.' In his distress of mind he burst into an agony of tears, and blood gushed from his nostrils. The king became impatient. The old man was dragged to the bed-side, and his right arm held out by the bishops to receive from the king the pastoral staff. But he kept his hand firmly clenched: they tried by main force to wrench it open, and, when the pain they put him to caused him to cry out, the bishops held the staff against his still closed hand. He was borne forth rather than led, with hymns and acclamations, to a neighbouring church, crying out 'It is naught that ye are doing, it is naught that ye are doing.' 'It would have been difficult to discover', writes he afterwards to his monks at Bec[1], 'whether madmen were dragging along one in his senses, or the sane a madman, save that they were chanting, and I looking more like a corpse than a living man, with amazement and anguish; and on the afternoon of the same day, when I had time to recollect myself and to realize your affection and the burden imposed on me, sorrow—so unusual with me—overcame my reason to such a degree that people thought I was dying or fainting, and brought holy water to sprinkle me or make me drink it.' In spite of what had passed, he persisted in refusing to acknowledge the validity of his appointment; and the matter was meanwhile referred to the decision of those to whose obedience and service he was already bound—the Archbishop of Rouen, the Duke of Normandy, and the monastery of Bec. Their consent was gained, not without difficulty on the part of the monks of Bec. We give the letter he received from the archbishop as a specimen of the sober and measured tone with which serious men in those days addressed a brother who was called to a high office in the Church—a tone not of congratulation for honours won, but of grave and subdued sympathy for a comrade going to his post of increased hazard and toil.

[1] Anselm, *Epist.*, iii, 1.

Brother William, archbishop, to his lord and friend Anselm; God's blessing and his own.

I have considered long and carefully, as was due in so important a matter, the subject of the king's letter and yours, and I have asked the advice of my own friends and yours upon it. The wish on all sides is, were it possible, to keep you still among us, and yet not to do anything to oppose the Divine will. But, as matters stand, both cannot be fulfilled, and we therefore, as is fitting and right, submit our will to His; and in the name of God and St Peter, and of all my friends and yours who love you for God's sake, I command you to undertake the pastoral care of the Church of Canterbury, and to receive according to the custom of the Church the episcopal benediction, and thenceforward to watch over the welfare of your sheep, by Divine providence, as we believe, committed to you. Farewell, my beloved.[1]

Anselm's nomination took place at Gloucester on the first Sunday in Lent, 1093 (March 6); but it was not till the autumn of the same year that he was at length prevailed upon by William's fair promises to undertake the primacy. He did homage[2], according to custom, and on the 4th of December he was consecrated at Canterbury by the Archbishop of York in the presence of nearly all the bishops of England.

At his consecration, when, according to the Roman ritual, the book of the Gospels was opened at random and laid on his shoulders, the passage which turned up was the following: 'He bade many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse.'[3] Men took this as an omen of the course of his Episcopate. It was no untrue augury. He stood on the verge of twelve years of anxious and unwearied service, to be repaid by unsympathizing lukewarmness or fierce persecution.

[1] 'Valete, viscera mea.'
[2] 'Homo regis factus est.'—Eadm., *Hist. Nov.*, p. 37.
[3] St Luke, xiv, 16–8.

The following year witnessed in England the first movements in the great struggle between the Church and the temporal power which was to last in various forms and with various fortunes long after Anselm and his antagonists were removed from it. With the revival of strictness, intelligence, and sense of duty, which had taken place in the Norman Church since the middle of the century, it was become inevitable. Such wild folly and wickedness as that of William and his court must, sooner or later, have called forth rebuke and systematic opposition, and feudal barons were not men to submit tamely to rebuke and opposition from priests and monks. The contest must begin, openly and in earnest, as soon as any churchman should have heart and faith to realize and fulfil his duty; Anselm had foreseen this, and that it must begin with him.

He had done what he could with a good conscience to avoid the primacy, and he had been overruled. But those powers which he had not sought, which had been forced into his hand, he was not going to wield in vain or feebly. William found that, instead of an unpractical recluse whose natural force had been abated by his monastic life and who was incapable of energetic and decisive action, a bishop had ascended the throne of Canterbury who could deal with men, and who, when once his path was plain, knew neither despair nor fear. Anselm had not left his Norman monastery, and altered in his old age in anxiety and sorrow his whole course of life, to become a mitred cypher or tool in the impure and boisterous court of William Rufus. The agony of change once over, he had calmly mastered what he was henceforth called to, and prepared himself for the worst. 'From the first', says Eadmer, 'he perceived and foretold that many would be the troubles he should have to suffer during his pontificate. Coming therefore to a new, and to him an unwonted, way of serving God, according to Solomon's

precept he stood in fear and prepared his soul for temptation, knowing that all who will live godly in Christ must needs suffer tribulation.'

He had given fair warning. Before he would accept the primacy, he laid before William explicitly and in the presence of witnesses the conditions on which alone he could consent to take it. These were that the property of the see should be restored in full and without trouble; that the obedience which as Abbot of Bec he had vowed to Pope Urban, whom William had not yet acknowledged, should not be questioned; and thirdly 'I will', said he, 'that in those things that pertain to God and Christian religion thou trust thyself to my counsel before all others; and, as I am willing to have thee for my earthly lord and defender, so that thou shouldest have me for thy spiritual father and soul's guardian.' He had small hopes that his counsel *would* be taken. 'The untamed bull to whom ye have yoked me', said he to the bishops who were so eager for his election at Gloucester, 'will gore and trample upon the old and feeble sheep, his yoke-fellow. And', he continued, 'when he has crushed me, of yourselves there will be no one who will dare oppose him in anything; and then, rest assured, he will not scruple at his pleasure to trample upon you also.'

His anticipations were soon realized. When the contest began, he had to fight alone. Of the English higher clergy two bishops only[1] seem to have shown him any sympathy; the rest either stood aloof or openly opposed him. From some of them this was to be expected—from men like John of

[1] Gundulf of Rochester, the archbishop's 'ever new and true friend' (*Ep.* iv, 44); and Ralph of Chichester, a man of blunt humour, of great simplicity of life, of unflinching courage, and of apostolic zeal in preaching, and visiting his diocese: 'Proceritate corporis insignis, sed et animi efficaciâ famosus, qui contuitu sacerdotalis officii Willielmo II in faciem pro Anselmo restitit.'—Will. Malmsb., *De Gest. Pontiff.*, ii, p. 257.

Bath, who had purchased his see as a good investment of capital, or the intriguing courtier William of Durham, the king's favourite, or Herbert the Wheedler (*Losinga*)[1] of Norwich. Yet, acting with these men were several of Lanfranc's bishops; men selected from the Norman monasteries for their earnestness and ability, loved and honoured in their generation. But even these remained neutral or sided with the world, and that, in the person of William Rufus, against the cause of the Church, though maintained by Anselm.

It is not necessary to suppose them more than usually weak or selfish in order to explain their conduct. They had but ordinary clear-sightedness and courage in a time which required more. The great revolution which had been working for years on the continent was at last coming on in the farthest West; and they were not yet ready for it. With much of earthly alloy, with much also of keen and genuine sensibility to the heavenly calling of the Church, the conviction was fast spreading that the rights and powers which had been tacitly yielded to feudalism must at all hazards be reclaimed. But in times like these, when new or forgotten opinions are gradually forming themselves under old ones, when new principles are silently gathering way, there are but few who from the first descry what is approaching and master in time the true position and drift of things. Most men go on as usual, unconscious of the powers that are awake and abroad, secretly stirring society. Custom is the stay and guide of life, and to realize change as a *fact* is hard. And even when it is in itself desirable, few feel sufficient confidence in themselves to warrant it to their own minds that the time is come for moving. It was a new thing for the English bishops to see a deliberate and resolute opposition to the king, a new and hard prospect to make up

[1] 'Quod nomen ei ars adulationis impegerat.'—*Vide* Will. Malmsb., *Gest. Reg.*, iv, § 338–40.

their minds to a life of conflict. Probably there was not one of Anselm's principles which they would have denied in the abstract; but they had not realized them as he had, and could only look at them as, under their circumstances at least, unpractical and romantic. They had been brought up under William the Conqueror's system; under it they had seen cathedrals raised, monasteries restored, the majesty of the church and the dignity of her prelates honoured by the world. And, whatever evils and abuses existed under it, a desperate conflict with the king would scarcely seem the most likely way to mend them. Moreover, Lanfranc, still the greatest name in England, the restorer of the English Church, under whom the best of her bishops had been trained, had given, as far as we can see, his countenance and hearty concurrence to the Conqueror's general policy towards the Church[1]. This may explain in some measure the part which the bishops took in the struggle of Anselm's episcopate. So it is however—it was not till after his death that the rulers of the English Church acknowledged him as their champion.

The storm which Anselm had looked for soon broke. Symptoms of it had shown themselves even before his consecration. On the very day of his enthronement at Canterbury, the joy of the people was disturbed by the appearance of the hateful and dreaded Ralph Flambard, who came to institute a

[1] During his contest with Henry I Anselm thus writes to Gundulf: 'Some evil-disposed persons in their ill-nature have put a false meaning on my letter to the king, as if I boasted of having always kept God's law, and accused the king's father and Archbishop Lanfranc of having lived without regard to it. Certainly the wit of these men is too fine or else too slender. What I say is that things were done, in their day, by the king's father and Archbishop Lanfranc—both of them great and religious men—which *I* cannot do at *this* time according to God's will, or without peril of my soul's salvation.'—Anselm, *Ep.* iv, 44.

suit against the archbishop in the king's name. And they were soon irreconcileably separated.

William's extortions from the clergy, heavy and cruel as they were, had been submitted to tamely; and he treated their remonstrances as the feeble murmurs of men who were too selfish to resist his injustice in earnest. Thus the money of the Church was squandered, to secure his capricious favour and support his wastefulness. Grievous, too, as the burden was to the higher clergy, they were not the chief sufferers. It was on the oppressed tenantry of the Church from whom the money had to be wrung, and on her dependents and pensioners that the tyranny fell most bitterly, on the poor who found refuge in the monasteries or were supported by their alms, on the houseless, the sick, and the stranger.

Anselm, on his consecration, had with difficulty raised 500 marks on his wasted estates, for a present to William, who was in want of money for one of his Norman wars. The king thought the sum too small, and, as his wont was when he was offended, refused it. Anselm went to him and pressed him to accept it; though small, it was offered freely, nor would it be the last; but he intimated plainly that he would not fall in with the king's system of extortion. 'As a friend', he said, 'you may do what you like with me and mine; on the footing of a slave neither me nor mine shall you have.' 'Keep your money and foul tongue to yourself; I have enough for myself; go, get you gone' was the king's answer, in his rough and broken way[1]. Anselm left him. He thought, says Ead-

[1] Will. Malmsb., *De Gest. Reg.*, p. 504: 'titubantia linguæ notabilis, maxime cum ira succresceret', which Rob. of Glouc. paraphrases, p. 414:

Reinable ne was he nought of tongue, but of speech hastyf (hasty),
Boffing (*i.e.* spluttering), and most when he was in wrath or in strife.

mer, of the words of the Gospel which had been read on the day when he first entered his cathedral: 'No man can serve two masters'. 'No one now, at least', he said, 'can accuse me of simony. The present which I meant for him shall go now, not to him but to Christ's poor, for the benefit of his soul.' He tried, however, once more to regain the king's favour, but he was told that the only way was to double his present; about this he was firm, and he left the court in disgrace.

William was beyond measure irritated at this resolute opposition from a clergyman, an old feeble monk, one too whom he himself had in a moment of weakness placed in the position to annoy him; but nothing was done for the present to molest Anselm. He held on his course, discharging the duties of his office; in the country, living among his tenants and writing on theology; at court, preaching against luxury and effeminate fashions, and refusing absolution to the disobedient; doing whatever he could to repair the mischiefs of the last six years. But his single efforts were vain against the frightful license which prevailed, and the other bishops kept aloof from him. His only hope was a synod. Could a council be summoned, men might speak and act in concert who would not act separately. The court was at Hastings, waiting for a wind to carry over the king to Normandy; and the bishops had been summoned thither to give him their blessing when he sailed. Anselm resolved to make one more effort to move William. He went to him and solemnly laid before him the state of things in England: 'Christian religion', he said, 'had well nigh perished among the people, and the land was become almost a Sodom: the only remedy was in a council of the Church.' William refused to hear of it. Anselm then entreated him at least to appoint abbots to the vacant and disorganized monasteries. 'What are they to you?' was the fierce answer; 'the abbeys, are they not mine?

May I not do what I please with them, as you do with your manors?' 'Yours they are', said Anselm, 'to protect, but not to lay waste; for they belong to God—to maintain his servants, not to support your wars.' 'Your predecessor dared not have held such language to my father' was the reply; 'Go, I will do nothing for you.' Anselm retired, and consulted the bishops. They could suggest no other advice than that of purchasing the king's favour. The archbishop indignantly rejected it; for the honour of the Church—in justice to his poor tenants,—on mere grounds of policy—he could not listen to so unworthy an expedient. 'My vassals', said he, 'have been plundered and made a prey since Lanfranc's death, and I have nothing to give them: shall I further go on to flay them alive?' The bishops recommended him to give at least the 500 marks which he had originally offered. 'No', said he, 'he has refused it once—it is gone to the poor now.'

William was furious when this was reported to him. 'Go tell him', was his message, 'that I hated him yesterday: henceforth I will hate him daily more and more. Father and Archbishop he shall be to me no longer. Let him not wait here to give me his blessing. I will cross without it.'

Such was the opening of the great trial of strength between the Church and feudalism in England. When opposite principles which have been for some time silently growing up together in society at length come into collision, they do not usually meet at first, except in a confused and partial manner. The war begins with skirmishes about petty posts, with disputes about trifles and quarrels seemingly personal. Conflicting tendencies touch each other and struggle in their distant results. In time, things clear; issues show themselves more distinctly, and are reduced into definite and tangible questions; reasons, given and answered, bring up new views of things, disengage and disentangle what was misunderstood or

dimly seen in men's own position and that of their opponents; and so the main battle is pushed farther and farther back on those great points upon which the whole movement rests and centres. This apparently petty dispute about 500 marks—involving, as it did, very sacred principles of that Christian law which was committed to the Church's keeping, and for the observance of which the Church, whenever she has understood her true position, has always made herself responsible—led on, by a series of close and obvious consequences, to the opening of those great questions between the spiritual and temporal powers, questions among the highest that can engage men's thoughts, which, even in our own day, remain unsettled.

There was enough in what had passed to open the eyes of all parties to the state of things with which they had to deal; to make it clear to Anselm that, if the law and powers of the Church were to continue among the most solemn realities of society, her independence must be at once and unequivocally asserted in the face of all England; and to William, that the Archbishop was resolved at all hazards to make that effort.

There are more than 700 years, with their burden of events—of sins and their punishments—between us and St Anselm; and this vast interval of time, with the fears and jealousies which are its legacy, make it necessary to say a word, not in defence or excuse of his line of conduct, for that it needs not, but in explanation of it. For, in maintaining the claims of the spiritual power, he maintained them, as involved and expressed in the claims of the Pope; and this at once prejudices his cause in modern eyes. In the present unhealthy and shattered state of Christendom we people past history with phantasms, and colour it with hues, which belong to our own days. Here in England, to have at any time supported the cause of the popes, shuts a man out from sympathy and even justice. But, without

going into the doctrinal part of the question, it is plain that we cannot speak of the Western Church of the eleventh century as if its circumstances and history were the same as those of the same Church in the nineteenth. The union of European Christendom under the Pope was the arrangement which had lasted under God's providence ever since the barbarians had been Christianised; it was the dispensation which was natural and familiar to men—the only one they could imagine, a dispensation, moreover, under which religion had achieved its conquests. The notion of being independent of the see of St Peter was one which was never found among the thoughts of a religious man even as a possibility, which never occurred even to an irreligious one except as involving disobedience and rebellion. We would have people reflect who shrink from looking with favour on any person or any policy which strengthened the see of Rome that there was a time when the authority of the popes was no controverted dogma—when it was as much a matter of course, even to those who opposed its exercise—as much an understood and received point, as the primacy of Canterbury and the king's supremacy is with us; and that in such times men fought for the Church as they must do always, under the forms—it may be temporary or faulty ones—in which her cause came into their hands. We cannot conceive how the keenest and most jealous Protestant can refuse to admit as much as this when he calmly realizes that what is history to him was the unknown future or the confused and hurried present to other men. And moreover, supposing the state of things we are speaking of to have been as corrupt and disordered as he deems it, we have but little right to judge those who worked with faith and a high heart under a faulty traditional system which involved and upheld unity in the Church, when we acquiesce so easily in our state of division and isolation from the great body

of believers. Nor was it only custom and association which bound men in those days to the order of things under which they had been born; whatever evil there may have been in it, there was also good, on a great and noble scale, to which they were keenly alive.

The unearthly origin of the Church, its unity and essential independence, the superiority of its claims to those of any power of this world, the idea of the Church as the 'kingdom of heaven', a universal spiritual empire—all this found an adequate memorial and expression in the Papacy. In those times men could not conceive of a law which had not a *person* to administer it; they could not realize an authority or power which had not its representative; and they saw in the Pope not merely the type but also the real and highest earthly organ of a power not of this world—not the symbol only, but the divinely-ordained guardian and minister of the great law of unity. Add to this, what is not matter of theory or doctrine but a fact of history, that in the time of which we speak the cause of the Popes was that of religion and holiness. With whatever amount of mistake, misdoing, or corruption among its supporters—however feebly they may often have realized their own principles—it was based on faith in the Unseen; it resisted and rebuked the world; it set a true value on the things of time. It is no wonder then—it would be a strange thing had it been otherwise—that such men as St Anselm should have been found in its ranks.

Certainly nothing so hampered the free working of the lawless and arbitrary spirit of feudalism as the existence of this system in the Church. Nations and their rulers could not feel that moral irresponsibility which they have since gained. They were members of Christendom as well as distinct political bodies; united *as Christians* to others, and accountable *as Christians* to the whole Church. There was a standard recognized by all higher than that of political expediency, a commonly acknowledged law

able to reach and visit crimes which national laws were ready to screen or were too weak to punish. There was an appeal from all earthly tribunals to one not merely higher but different in kind. An appeal to the See of Rome was not only virtually an appeal to the whole of Christendom—it was also an appeal to the judgment-seat of our Lord.

It was to break loose from the restraints imposed by the still real unity of the Church that the feudal princes opposed so vigorously the power of the Popes. It was not that they resisted or doubted their claim to be the divinely appointed presidents of the Church: *that* they acknowledged as much as they did the local claims of their own bishops; it was the authority of religion and the Church, which they felt to be represented by the Popes, which excited their impatience and hatred. They acknowledged the law while they disobeyed it: they thought to escape the invisible powers of the Church by fettering her Ministers or refusing to hear her sentence; but they never doubted either the reality of those powers or her right, in the abstract, to use them [1]. Their opposition was based not on any religious scruples, scarcely on any distinct views of political greatness, but on the privileges of the feudal military law—on precedents exempting them from the law of the Church. They recognized its jurisdiction; what they fought for was unlimited dispensation from it in their own persons.

[1] William, Count of Poitiers, had taken another man's wife. 'Cum Petrus Pictavorum Episcopus eum liberius argueret, et detrectantem palam excommunicare inciperet, ille præcipiti furore percitus, crinem antistatas involat, strictumque mucronem vibrans, "*Jam*", inquit, "*morieris nisi me absolvens.*" Tum vero præsul, *timore simulato, inducias petens loquendi, quod reliquum fuerat excommunicationis fidenter peroravit.* Ita officio suo peracto, martyriumque sitiens, collum protendit: "Feri", inquit, "feri." At Willelmus, refractior, consuetum leporem intulit, ut diceret, "Tantum certe te odio, ut nec meo te digner odio, nec cœlum unquam intrabis meæ manus ministerio."'—Will. Malms., l. v, § 439.

The results of his quarrel with Anselm had taught William that the Church, humbled as she was, might yet under able and resolute guidance, such as she had gained in the archbishop, be able to check and thwart him. And her power of maintaining her ground against him was visibly strengthened by her union with the rest of the Western Church and with the Pope. Whatever measures William might pursue in England, he could not prevent Anselm from ultimately falling back on an authority to which it was impossible, without avowed disobedience, to refuse to listen. It became William's object, therefore, to perplex and weaken the archbishop by detaching him, indirectly if possible, from the Pope, and isolating him from the rest of Christendom. The circumstances of the times were favourable to his attempt. There were at the moment two claimants of the throne of St Peter, Urban the Second and the Antipope Guibert, and the English Church had hitherto acknowledged neither. Without therefore denying the rights of the apostolic see, William, acting on the precedent established by his father, might require the bishops to suspend their obedience till he had decided which of the two rivals had really a claim to it.

But there was a difficulty in the case of the archbishop; he had already acknowledged Urban, and had distinctly reserved his obedience to him, before he would accept the primacy. William, however, was not to be turned aside from his purpose easily. The point soon came to an issue between him and the archbishop; in what manner and with what results will be seen from the following transaction, the details of which are given by Eadmer.

On Mid-lent Sunday, 1095 (March 11) the prelates and nobility of England, with a large concourse of the lower orders, met at the hour of prime in the Church of Rockingham Castle to hold a solemn council. The peers had been summoned to answer an appeal made to them by the archbishop, for

their judgment and council in a very important question lately raised between himself and the king. When he had applied to the king for leave to make the customary journey to Rome, in order to receive the metropolitan pall, the king had asked him 'from which Pope he meant to ask it'; and, on being told 'from Urban', he had charged the archbishop with a breach of his fealty and allegiance, in daring to recognize a Pope not yet acknowledged by the realm, and told him that he must either disclaim Urban till the king's pleasure were known or leave England. His obedience to Pope Urban, the king said, was incompatible with his duty as a subject. It was on this point that the archbishop had asked and received permission to seek the advice of his peers. He laid his case fully before them, reminding them that they had forced him into his present position, with full warning from him of the difficulties which were likely to ensue and with a pledge on their part of sympathy and aid. 'It is a grievous thing for me', he concluded, 'to despise and disown the vicar of St Peter; it is a grievous thing to break the faith which I promised to keep to the king according to God's law: nevertheless it is a grievous thing to be told that I cannot do my duty to either one of these except at the expense of my allegiance to the other.'

The bishops, to whom he had especially addressed himself, declined to give him any counsel for the present, except on condition of his submitting unconditionally to the king; but they offered to report what he had said to William, who was waiting the issue in another part of the castle, and communicate what he might say in answer; and thus the question was put off till the next day.

The following morning the assembly met again. The archbishop took his seat in the midst, and repeated his request to the bishops for their counsel. But he again asked in vain. They replied as they had done the day before—they would give no counsel

on religious grounds (*secundum Deum*) which should in any respect oppose the king's will. They gave their answer like men who felt the shame and cowardice of their position: 'they hung down their heads in silence', says Eadmer, 'expecting what was coming on them'. Anselm's countenance lighted up when he heard their determination, and, raising his eyes to heaven, he solemnly addressed his protest to the assembled bishops and nobles:

Since you (he said) who are called the pastors of Christ's flock, and you who are styled chiefs among the people, refuse your counsel to me your chief, except according to the will of one man, I will betake myself to the Chief Shepherd and Prince of all; I will fly to the 'Angel of Great Counsel', and from Him I will receive the counsel which I will follow in this my cause—yea, rather, *His* cause and that of His Church. He says to the most blessed of the apostles, Peter: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church', and again to all the apostles jointly: 'He who hears you hears Me; and he who despises you despises Me.' It was primarily to St Peter, and in him to the other apostles—it is to the vicar of St Peter, and through him to the other bishops who fill the apostles' places—that these words, as we believe, were addressed; but to no emperor whatsoever, to no king, or duke, or earl. In what point we must be subject to earthly princes, the same Angel of Great Counsel has taught us, saying 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.' These are the words and counsels of God, and by them I will abide. Know ye therefore all of you that in the things that are God's I will render obedience to the vicar of St Peter; in those that belong of right to the earthly dignity of my lord the king I will render him both faithful counsel and service, to the best of my knowledge and power.

The bishops had a difficult part to play: they had to support the king's cause in the face of their own convictions, in the face of what they believed to be the plain meaning of texts of Scripture, in the face of their vow of canonical obedience, with the full consciousness that the eyes of all, allies and opponents, were open to their false position, that they would find sympathy neither in England nor in Christendom, and that by none were they so

thoroughly seen through and despised as by the king, whose tools they had consented to make themselves. The archbishop's speech was received in clamour and tumult; no one ventured to answer it; no one would report it to the king; and the assembly broke up in confusion. Anselm was not daunted; he went himself to the royal chamber and repeated his words in William's presence.

The day was spent by the king's party in angry and fruitless deliberation. William looked to the bishops to defeat Anslem on his own ground; the bishops, irritated at once by the hopelessness of their case and by their fear of disappointing William, were unable to agree among themselves upon the course to be pursued. The archbishop meanwhile had returned to the church to wait the result: while his opponents, broken up into knots of two and three, were engaged in eager and fruitless discussion, he remained in his seat, and at last, wearied out with the delay, 'leaning his head against the wall, he fell into a calm sleep'. Towards the end of the day the bishops, with some of the nobility, came to him from the king. 'Their advice to him', they said, 'was that he should submit without further hesitation to the customs of the realm, which the king valued as highly as his crown, and at once give up Urban.' Anslem asked till the next day to return a formal answer. They thought he was wavering or at a loss for an immediate reply, and urged the king to take advantage of his indecision. William, Bishop of Durham, who had throughout taken the lead against the archbishop, and who had engaged to force him either to commit himself to a disavowal of Urban or to resign his ring and crosier, now came to him, and called on him peremptorily to yield to the king his dignity and prerogative or to prepare at once for his own just sentence. But he had overstepped his mark. Anslem answered quietly and briefly: 'Whosoever wishes to prove that, because I will not renounce the obedience of the chief bishop of the

venerable Holy Roman Church, I am therefore breaking faith and allegiance to my earthly king, let him come forward, and he shall find me ready, *as* I ought, and *where* I ought, to render my answer.'

They had nothing to reply, and retired to the king. A suppressed murmur of indignation ran through the crowd of the lower orders, which had filled the body of the church the whole day and had hitherto looked on in silent sympathy, not daring to express their feelings. At length a soldier stept out of the throng, and knelt before the archbishop: 'Lord and Father', said he, 'thy children humbly beseech thee by me that thy heart be not troubled by what thou hast heard; but remember blessed Job, who vanquished the devil on a dung-hill, and avenged Adam, whom the devil had conquered in Paradise.'

William of Durham had to report to the king 'tamely and faintly'[1] the complete failure of his attempt. Evening was closing in, and the assembly again adjourned. The king was exasperated[2] in the highest degree with the archbishop, and scarcely less so with the bishops. At last William of Durham proposed that Anslem should be deprived by violence and driven out of England. But against this the lay barons, who had been moved by the archbishop's calm self-possession and readiness in answering, protested strongly. 'If this then pleases you not', said the king, 'what *will* please you? In this realm I will endure no equal. It is by following your counsel and plans that things have been brought to this pass. Away with you; get you gone, and lay your heads together, for by God's countenance, if ye condemn him not, according to my will, I will condemn you.'

William found it impossible to prevail upon the bishops to pass sentence on Anslem; but he found them willing to renounce his obedience. The lay barons on the other hand firmly refused to follow

[1] 'Tepide et silenter'—Eadmer.

[2] 'Usque ad divisionem spiritus sui'—Eadmer.

their example. As a feudal superior he did not claim their obedience; as their archbishop and spiritual father he had done nothing to forfeit it. This refusal left the bishops alone in their miserable position; and their confusion was increased by William's calling on them severally to declare whether they renounced their obedience to the archbishop unconditionally or only so far as it implied the claims of Pope Urban. They were divided in their answers; those who refused an unconditional renunciation were driven from William's presence, and had to regain his favour by large gifts. But it was an impolitic step on his part; for it broke up his party among the bishops, and, by forcing them to this disgraceful alternative, he brought to a head the growing feeling of disgust and scorn with which their conduct was viewed even by the nobility. Those especially among them who had entirely renounced the archbishop were openly insulted even in the court; it was plain that their influence would no longer weigh with any one or their concurrence give plausibility to any measure. There remained nothing farther to be done against the archbishop except in the way of open violence; and men were not yet ripe for that. It was agreed therefore that matters should be left as they were for the present, and should stand over till after the following Whitsuntide.

William immediately despatched two of his chaplains, Gerard, afterwards archbishop of York, and William Warelwast, to intrigue at Rome. What they said or did there does not appear. They were men who, as they showed afterwards, would not be scrupulous in serving their master; but the result of their negociation was the mission by Pope Urban of Cardinal Walter of Albano to the king, secretly bearing with him the metropolitan pall. On landing in England, the legate took no notice of the archbishop, though he had to pass through Canterbury; but went straight to the court. Of his proceedings

there, which were looked upon at the time with great distrust and dissatisfaction by the archbishop's friends [1], all we know is that William was induced, by the grant, Eadmer says, of special privileges from the Roman See, to acknowledge Urban; but that when he demanded in return the deposition of Anselm, by the authority or at least with the consent of the legate, he was at once and peremptorily refused. Disappointed and baffled, he seems to have resolved to put the best face upon matters, and consent to a reconciliation with the archbishop, which took place shortly after, but not without another vain attempt on the part of the bishops to induce Anselm, by concealing from him the real state of things at court, to purchase the king's favour by a large present.

William's party wished the archbishop to receive the pall from the hands of the king. Anselm objected, for the privileges and powers which it symbolized and conveyed belonged not to the king to give, but to the spiritual ruler of the Church. It was determined therefore that it should be laid on the high altar of Canterbury, from whence the archbishop should take it. On the third Sunday after Trinity the legate, bearing it in a silver casket, was met at Canterbury by the archbishop and bishops of England in procession, barefooted but in their sacer-

[1] Anselm certainly was but little indebted in any way to the legate's good offices, whose wish seems to have been to do as little as he could for the English Church and to save his own character by trying to put Anselm in the wrong. In a letter of Anselm's to him, after the reconciliation (*Ep.*, iii, 36), written under considerable self-restraint and in a tone of measured politeness, which scarcely disguises the writer's indignant contempt for his correspondent's insincerity, the archbishop meets the charge of want of hearty concurrence, and remarks with quiet severity upon the legate's affected difficulties about Anselm's consecration, his readiness to listen to stories, and his 'defence of the archbishop as far as he could' against accusations which he could not but know to be untrue.

dotal vestments, and conducted to the cathedral, where Anselm, wearing for the first time the symbol of his metropolitan dignity, celebrated the holy Eucharist. The gospel read in the service was the same passage which had been taken as the presage of his episcopate at his consecration, the parable of the great supper [1]. Those monitory words were still to be fulfilled; the work in which he was engaged, though so far he had been successful, was not yet over.

The reconciliation did not last long. William continued as profligate and oppressive as ever, and soon began to molest the archbishop personally. For some alleged neglect of feudal service he was summoned to appear before the king's court. 'We looked for peace', said he on receiving the order, 'and there is no good—for the time of healing, and behold trouble.' It was become plain that the king was resolved to crush him; in England he was fighting single-handed; there was nothing left for him but to refer matters to the Pope. We will give his own account of his position about this time, in an extract from a letter written by him to Pope Urban, shortly after he had received the pall.

> Holy father, (he writes, after having explained why he had not been able to visit Rome) it grieves me that I am what I am—that I am not what I was. It grieves me that I am a bishop, for my sins prevent me from doing the work of a bishop. When I was in a humble station, I seemed to be doing something; now that I am exalted to high place, I am weighed down with a load which is too heavy for me, and I do no good either for myself or others. . . I long to escape from an intolerable charge, and to lay down my burden; on the other hand, I fear to offend God. The fear of God, which made me undertake it, compels me to keep it. If I knew God's will, I would direct my will and conduct according to it; but it is hidden from me, and I know not what to do: I cannot see my way, or make out what conclusion I ought to come to.

He goes on to entreat Urban's prayers, 'lest, tossed by the waves of such thoughts, he should

[1] This is read in the Sarum Missal on the 2nd Sunday.

altogether sink, or attain to nothing'; and prays that, if at last 'in shipwreck he should have to seek refuge from the storm in the bosom of his mother the Church, he may, for the sake of Him who shed His blood for us, find there ready and compassionate aid and solace.'[1]

Such were his feelings and prospects in 1096. Shortly after, in that same year, he was forced by William to quit England as a banished man. The causes of his exile are thus stated in a letter written by him two years after, to Paschal II, Urban's successor[2].

. . . I had before my eyes in England a multitude of evils which it was my province to correct. I could neither correct them nor yet tolerate them without sin. The king required me, on the score of duty, to consent to his will and pleasure in matters which were against the law and will of God. For, without his command, he would not that any successor of the Apostles should be received, or be so styled, in England; nor that I should hold communication with him or obey his decrees. Since he came to the throne, which is now thirteen years, he has not allowed a council to be held. The lands of the Church he gave to his vassals; and, if in these and such like matters I sought counsel, every one refused it to me, even my own suffragans, except according to his will. Seeing then these and many other violations of the will and law of God, I asked leave of him to visit the Apostolic See, that I might receive advice from thence touching my own soul and the office enjoined me. The king answered that I had committed a crime against him in merely thus asking leave, and gave me the choice either of making amends for this as for an offence, and giving him security that I would never ask this leave again, or appeal to the Apostolic See—or else, of taking my speedy departure from his realm. I chose rather to depart than to agree to such a scandalous act. I came to Rome, as you know, and laid the whole matter before my Lord the Pope. The king, as soon as I had left England, laid hands on the whole archbishopric, and, leaving just enough to clothe and feed our monks, turned it to his own purposes. Warned and intreated by my Lord the Pope to alter his conduct, he has scorned to do so, and to this day holds on in the same course. It is now the third year since I thus left England;

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[1] *Ep.*, iii, 37. [2] *Ep.*, iii, 40.

the little that I brought with me and the large sums which I have borrowed and not yet repaid are all spent; and, thus deeply in debt but possessed of nothing, I am living on the bounty of our venerable father, the Archbishop of Lyons. . .

As the letter states, the king, though he had acknowledged Urban, had treated Anselm's application as a breach of his oath of allegiance. The nobility took part against the archbishop, and his suffragans again deserted him. Their address to him is too remarkable to be omitted:

'Lord father, we well know that thou art a pious and holy man and hast thy desires in heaven. We, by our relatives whom we support, by temporal circumstances in which we are engaged, are withheld from ascending to your magnanimity and from making sport of the world. But, if you are willing to descend to us and imitate our conduct, we will assist you with the same counsel with which we assist each other, and will succour you in your embarrassments. But, should you abide by your former principles, we will not desert our fidelity to the king nor separate ourselves from him.' Anselm replied: 'You have answered well: go to your lord—I will hold to my God.'—Möhler (from Eadmer), p. 82[1].

On his refusing to comply with the king's wishes, he was ordered to be ready to quit England in ten days. Before he left the court, he went to the king 'with a cheerful and pleasant countenance', and offered him his benediction. 'I know not when I shall see you again', he said, 'and, if you refuse it not, I would fain give you my blessing—the blessing of a father to his son, of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the King of England.' The rough king was for a moment touched, perhaps awed, by Anselm's calm but solemn way of closing their personal intercourse. He could not refrain from bowing his head, while the Archbishop made the sign of the cross over him, and departed; and they never met again.

Anselm was persecuted to the last with insult and annoyance. As he was embarking at Dover, William Warelwast, the king's chaplain, who had been living

[1] We have altered a few words in this translation.

for several days at the archbishop's board, caused his luggage to be broken open on the beach, and searched in the hope of finding treasure. Thus he went forth to his exile; it was the issue he had foreseen from the first: to pass his old age in destitution, and 'without certain dwelling-place; in journeyings often, in perils of robbers, in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness'.

The part of a confessor was no easy or safe one; yet in those days, in spite of the wickedness and misery so rife in them, the promise made to those who leave all for the Gospel of finding, even here, 'houses and brethren an hundred fold' was still amply fulfilled. Travellers, especially if they bore a religious character, were generally sure of a welcome—not as foreigners, but as Christians; toilsome and dangerous as their road usually was, they might reckon on a monastery at the end of each day's journey where they would find not only rest but sympathy. And moreover, in spite of imperfect civilization and fierce wars, Christendom was in a very great measure, even politically, one body, and national distinctions were often forgotten in the common citizenship of the Church. Thus it was no strange thing for a native of the South to connect his name and fortunes for ever with a people of the North. We have in Lanfranc, for instance, an Italian, first the ruler and all but the founder of the most famous Norman monastery, and then, as primate of England, master of the sympathies, and guiding the ecclesiastical action of these same Normans among their newly conquered Saxon subjects; and shortly after we see another Italian, trained in the same Norman abbey, returning in his old age to his native land, a stranger and an exiled Archbishop of Canterbury.

Along his road, and in Italy, Anselm was received, as was due to his name and cause, with honour by the great, with almost enthusiastic love by the poor. Nothing is more striking in Eadmer's minute but

unstudied narratives than his account of the intercourse between the archbishop and the lower orders, and the interest he excited among them. Over and above his untiring sympathy for their wants and wishes bodily and spiritual, there was a charm in his singular elasticity of character and graceful bearing, in his easy gaiety and hearty condescending kindness, which drew them in throngs around him. 'His countenance alone'[1], says his companion, 'even where he was not known, arrested their admiring attention.' While staying in the camp of the Duke of Apulia the very Saracens of the army, some of whom had shared his bounty, used to bless him with uplifted hands, and salute him after their national fashion, 'kissing their own hands and bending their knees before him' as he passed through their quarters[2].

But his quarrel was taken up feebly at Rome. He waited through two years' of negociation, but nothing was done. His able and seasonable defence of the Latin Creed against the Greeks at the council of Bari, together with his uncomplaining cheerfulness, had won him the sympathy of the Italian bishops, and by many of them the indecision and lukewarmness of the Roman Court were felt strongly. At the Council of Lateran, 1099, this feeling showed itself. We quote Dr Möhler's account of the proceedings, with a few verbal alterations:

At Easter the customary Roman Synod was held; many Gallic and Italian bishops were present; at the conclusion the canons which had been passed were again to be read. As the synod was held publicly in the church, in the same manner as the assembly of the lords and bishops, which Anselm had convened (?) at the commencement of his contest, many of the people flocked to the important discussion. It was desirable

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[1] Ead., *Vit. S. Anselmi*, p. 20.

[2] *Id.*, p. 21. Many of them, he adds, would have received Anselm's instructions, and become Christians, but for their lord, the Count of Sicily, who would suffer none of them to embrace the faith with impunity.

that the resolutions should be distinctly read; the Bishop of Lucca, who had a powerful voice, was therefore selected for this office. He had read but a few decrees, when he suddenly paused, and under violent internal excitement, manifested by his agitated appearance and by the various expressions of his countenance, addressed the Pope in these violent words: 'What are we doing? We are loading our people with decrees, and we offer no resistance to the despotism of tyrants. Their oppressions and robberies of the church are daily reported to this See. As the head of all, you are called upon for counsel and assistance; but with what success is known and deplored by the whole world. From the ends of the earth there sits one among us in meek and humble silence. But his silence is a loud cry. The greater his humility, the milder his mood, the more powerful is he with God and the more should he inflame us. It is now two years since his arrival, and what assistance has he received? Know ye not all to whom I allude? It is to Anselm, the Primate of England.' With these words he raised his staff, and struck it so violently upon the pavement that the church re-echoed around. The Pope looked towards him and said: 'It is sufficient, Reinger, it is sufficient; good counsel shall soon be adopted.'—Möhler, pp. 86, 87.

The council however broke up without any further steps being taken, and Anselm at length left Italy in despair, and took refuge, as he states in the letter quoted above, with the Archbishop of Lyons [1].

The death of the Pope, which happened shortly afterwards, relieved William from the difficulty into which he had brought himself by acknowledging Urban. 'Evil be with him who cares for it' was his remark on hearing the news. He was resolved not to repeat the mistake, especially as the new Pope was reported to be 'one of Anselm's sort'. 'His popedom', he said with an oath, 'shall not override me this time; now that I am free, I will remain so.'

[1] It must be said in fairness that Dr Möhler, not from any blind partiality, approves Urban's 'moderation'. The Pope, he says, 'could not act otherwise.' Anselm, however, certainly did feel that Urban *might* have done something for him, but showed no disposition to do it.—See *Epist.*, iii, 40. Dr Möhler is mistaken in saying that the Bishop of Lucca called for William's 'unconditional deposition': there were many measures of punishment short of that.

But the career of this miserable man was coming to a close. Men shuddered at his frightful blasphemies and his ferocious hatred against everything connected with religion; they waited with awe to see where his reckless course would end, and looked out for visible signs of the presence and power of the evil one to whom he had sold himself. He had sworn with an oath, on recovering from his last sickness [1], 'that God should never have any good in him, for all the evil which he had brought upon him.' 'From that time', says Eadmer, 'he succeeded in everything he wished for or attempted. The very wind and sea seemed to serve his will, as if God would leave him without excuse by granting all that he wished for.' 'Yet', said those around him, 'never a night came but he lay down a worse man than he rose; and never a morning but he rose worse than he lay down'.

He heard of Urban's death in October, 1099. On the 2nd of August following he rode out at midday, after a wild debauch, to hunt in the New Forest—the chase, which his father had made by laying waste hearth and burial ground, and in which two of his family had already perished—in the evening his body was found pierced by an arrow through the heart. This is all that is certainly known of his end. The account commonly received was, that he was killed by a chance arrow from Sir Walter Tyrrel [2]. Wild and strange tales were circulated respecting the cir-

[1] When Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester, expressed a hope that he would take warning by what had happened, his answer was 'Scias, O Episcope, quod, per Sanctum Vultum de Luca, nunquam me Deus bonum habebit, pro malo quod mihi intulit'—which is strangely mistranslated in Möhler, Engl. Transl., p. 67.

[2] Doubt is thrown upon it by Eadmer, and by Abbot Suger, who writes that he had often heard Tyrrell declare on his oath that he had not been in the same part of the forest with the king during the whole day. (Quoted in Hardy's ed. of W. Malms. p. 508.) No one ever professed to have been an eyewitness of William's death.

cumstances of his death, the warnings which he had received, the weapon with which he was slain, the invocation of the name of the evil one with which he called for the fatal discharge; showing at least the deep and peculiar awe with which his contemporaries regarded his mysterious end, and which even at this distance of time we can hardly help sharing, while we read their accounts. In the full tide of his triumph, on the eve of adding Poitou and Aquitaine to his dominions, of all princes of the West the most wicked yet the most prosperous, he was struck down in a moment, 'impenitent and unshriven', with the spoils of sacrilege, which he had relinquished in sickness, once more in his hands. His body was found by some charcoal burners, who threw it into their cart 'as if it had been the carcase of some savage beast of chase', and carried it into Winchester, 'his blood dropping along the road as they went'. He was buried the next day in the Cathedral choir, for he had been a King of England; but his funeral was a hurried and unwept one. The church-bells in many places, which 'toll (says Ordericus) for the poorest beggars and basest women, tolled not for him; and (he continues) out of the vast heaps of treasure which he had wrung from rich and poor no alms were given for his soul.'

ST ANSELM AND HENRY I

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In the efforts of the reforming party in the Church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries one of the most prominent points, as every one knows, was their pertinacious war against the practice of laymen investing clergymen with church benefices and offices. For nearly a century this was the cause of strife, the *fons malorum*—in the eyes of churchmen the unendurable grievance, the foul and deadly abomination which darkened their day, the all but heretical corruption which foreboded Antichrist. It was a slight matter in itself. A ceremony—a trifling act of state and show—a form, symbolical in its origin, of simply arbitrary and disputable meaning, by long practice come to be a mere matter of course, a technicality of feudal etiquette—the delivery of a gold ring and a bent staff by a layman to a priest: this was the point in debate; this it was which employed the lives of such men as Pope Gregory VII and the Emperor Henry IV, and threatened to shiver Christendom into fragments, soon to return to their old barbarian heathenism. But what seemed the cause was only the symbol of the quarrel, a serious and real one. As in many other instances before and since, principles which were life or death to the world had attached themselves to some paltry fragment of human pageantry, some device or fancy of the hour, thenceforth the gage or prize of battle, and were to stand or fall with it. The fate of Europe, perhaps of the Church, hung on the decision of the investiture question. It was the struggle—a confused and entangled, but a real one—of faith against self-will, of purity against lawlessness, of spiritual power against force and the sword.

This and no other, as far as man can separate and oppose parties and their motives, is the meaning of the contest in those times between 'royalty and the priesthood'—as we should now term it, between

Church and State. The Church could not reform itself, could not do its work, could not insure its own permanence in Europe, while its present relations to the rulers of the world, the growth of three hundred years of misdoing, continued; if it was to hope for purity, it must strive and, if necessary suffer, for liberty. And by the joint instinct of both parties the issue was put upon the question of lay investiture.

This issue was first raised in England by St Anselm. The present essay is intended to present a sketch of the contest upon it. But the subject itself of investiture, though it cannot be fully investigated here, requires a few words to trace its connection with the great struggle in which it was so prominent a feature.

In the tumultuary beginnings of society in modern Europe the claims of the Church and of the barbarian kings, both equally great, ran side by side, clashing or in turn prevailing by the force of circumstances or personal character, without any serious attempt, as there was no pressing need, to harmonize or guard them. Thus it was till the union of Western Christendom under the empire of Charlemagne. This great event was, as it were, a new beginning to European history. This empire was a mighty religious monarchy which aimed at reviving, in Christian times and on a grander scale, the kingdoms of Solomon and Josiah—a power thought to be received by consecration from above as truly as the priesthood, the guardian of the Catholic faith, and of truth, duty, and peace among all Christian men. It rose among the new nations of the West, awakening ideas and opening prospects hitherto unknown to them. Then for the first time they realized their own greatness and dignity; they had not only conquered Rome but inherited her grandeur. Till Charlemagne they had felt themselves intruders—they called themselves barbarians. But now the 'glorious and religious emperor of the Christians', so valorous, so wise, so potent, that he

overshadowed all the old heathen Cæsars, was one of their own blood and language: he had been crowned at Rome, 'the Mother of the Empire, where Cæsars and emperors were wont always to sit'; they had seen the 'worship' and heard the acclamations of the Roman people—'*Carolo Augusto a Deo coronato, magno et pacifico Imperatori, vita et victoria*'.[1] He became to them as a national ancestor, a sort of mythic hero, sung in legends which took their place among those old songs—*barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus veterum regum actus et prælia canebantur*[2], which he had loved so much himself. Aix-la-Chapelle became almost a hallowed city. He had fixed and embodied to Europe the idea of Christian royalty, and was henceforth its great model and type.

The idea of Charlemagne's empire was a severe all-absorbing despotism, serving the cause of justice and the Christian faith; set up not for mere secular government but in order to make earthly power bend to the revealed designs of God. The emperor bore a sacred office; he was the 'figure of God's majesty', the image and instrument of God's *power*—power without stint or appeal, guided by inflexible goodness. He was raised up to be the *advocatus ecclesiæ;* to his honour and good sword was committed the Bride of the Holy One while sojourning on earth; for her safety and purity his imperial faith was pledged. Nations and individuals—the whole multitude of the faithful, small and great—the Church in her spiritual and temporal interests, were given into his hands: there was nothing for which he was not directly responsible. Bishops as well as counts 'bore a part, and but a part, in the ministry which in its fulness centered in him'.[3] And, because spiritual things are above temporal, he would be betraying his trust unless in every matter,

[1] Eginhard, *Ann. Franc.*, 801.
[2] Eginhard, *Vit. Kar. Imp.*, c. 29.
[3] *Capit. Lud. Pi.* anno 823, c. 3.

spiritual even more than temporal, he was most jealously watchful; unless, while he honoured bishops as God's especial servants, he kept them most strictly to their duty. Hence, while their place was the nearest to his throne, while he secured their fair and free election and gave them wealth and honour, it was he who 'committed the bishoprics to their hands' before they could be consecrated; he watched over and admonished his ecclesiastical as well as his lay 'helpers' (*adjutores*), holding councils with them, collecting and promulgating through Christendom the canons of the Church, inquiring into and ruling everything, from the business of a synod to that of an archdeacon or parish vestry—points of faith, morality, discipline, ecclesiastical convenience, the Catholic creed, names of angels, apocryphal works, festivals and tithes, furniture of the altar, church-building, the use and preparation of chrism and holy water, the duties of the confessor to his penitents—publishing in juxtaposition laws about the assembling of councils or the education of the people, and regulations that 'priests should ring their bells at due times', that 'scribes should not write faultily', and that 'no man should force another to drink wine against his will'.

Thus did Charlemagne read his commission. A theory in strong hands is or creates what it supposes; and, with the allowances required by every age and every kind of rule, he was a true and earnest Christian emperor: his monarchy looks still, as the Middle-Age Church considered it, a providential order. But his great and leading idea, the empire of *Law* based upon the Church, issuing from one, binding together and controlling men and kingdoms, his '*regnandi disciplina*', was soon lost in the tumults and violence which were not yet to cease in Europe. His empire continued in name and theory and pretensions the same, but its religious character ceased to be a reality under his feudal successors.

In the eleventh century, feudalism, the joint result of the temper and native customs of the barbarians and of their position in Roman Europe[1], was the recognized political system of Christendom —a system daily shaping itself into greater distinctness and consistency of detail, and to whose precedents and forms every thing was adjusting itself. Its characteristic feature was vassalage, as the necessary and universal condition of social life. Where it prevailed, men were held together not so much by public law and power as by a kind of network, a mutually connected series of personal and private ties of a formal and solemn character between the weak and the powerful. And a strong tie it was. There was no earthly bond between man and man more stringent in its idea than that between lord and vassal; not that between master and slave, general and soldier, king and subject—nay, even between parent and child. It ran parallel to the relation between man and wife; and accordingly the feudal law, at least in England, excused a woman from the full profession of vassalage[2], 'because it is not fitting that a woman should say that she will become a woman to any man, but to her husband when she is married'. It was in all its forms and terms a *military* relation, supposing a state of continual war. In days when men were not born into a self-acting system of order and law, when every man must look to himself and none could stand alone, the weak could do nothing better than link himself unconditionally to one more powerful and noble, who could give him a standing-place in the confusion; while to the strong there was nothing more useful than the free service of a stout vassal. Thus the lord and vassal were bound together by the honour and frank generosity of soldiers. Such was vassalage in its theory and forms, even after they had become legal fictions. 'Between lord and

[1] Palgrave's *Anglo-Saxons*, c. xvii.
[2] *Litt.*, ii, 87.

man there is only faith ' says the old feudal customs; a fief was not bargained for and sold, but given; the return was not rents but a man's unstinted devotion; the formal crime which forfeited it was ' ingratitude '. When the compact was sealed by the vassal's homage, ' the most honourable service and most humble service that a free tenant may do his lord ', he came before him in the guise of a helpless suppliant, without arms or spurs, and surrendered up person and fortunes into his hands. ' The tenant shall be ungirt and his head uncovered, and his lord shall sit, and the tenant shall kneel before him on both his knees, and hold his hands jointly together between the hands of his lord, and shall say thus : " I become your man from this day forward of life and limb and earthly worship, and unto you shall be true and faithful—saving the faith that I owe to our sovereign lord the king "; and his lord so sitting shall kiss him.'[1] The reservation at the end was no idle or superfluous one. Feudal law by no means took it as a *matter of course* that duty to the king superseded duty to the lord[2].

Feudalism, in spite of its generous maxims, in spite of the noble and gallant character which, to a certain extent justly, is associated with it—the compensation for the turmoil and suffering which nursed it—soon stiffened into a hard system of customary law, interpreted and administered by those who had the stoutest arm and fewest scruples. It became the strength of a great military aristocracy. And truly those noble barons were a rough sort of governors and shepherds of the people. Our poetical notions of a gay and gentle chivalry fade away cruelly, we had almost said ludicrously, before the frightful realities of European life as drawn by the Middle-Age historians. *Their* picture is of a gradation of chiefs, with their rude ferocious soldiery posted through the country; each in his own county

[1] *Litt.*. ii, 85.

[2] Allen, *Royal Prerog.*, p. 74. Hallam, *Midd. Ages*, i, 174.

or honour or castlewick, able safely to do as he pleased; men of ungovernable passions, living for the stormy excitements of battle, or of their own scarcely less terrible castles; savagely vindictive, and wayward as children, holding scruples of all kinds in very unaffected contempt, and increasing their broad lands and ready money by every means in their power. Portraits of them meet us at every turn in the contemporary chroniclers. In the early years of the Conqueror, Ivo Taillebois played tyrant in Hoyland; and though the Hoylanders 'most worshipfully honoured him, and bent the knee before him, and paid him all the honours they could, and all the service they ought', his hard mind was not moved thereby; 'he did not love them with reciprocal confidence', but drove them out of their senses or their lands, especially the monks, against whom he had an especial spite, by his ruthless deeds —*torquens et tribulans, angens et angarians, incarcerans et excrucians*—in very wantonness cutting off the ears and tails of their cattle, or chasing them into the fens with his hounds, or breaking their backs and legs, and so making them 'altogether useless'.[1] Such were the multitude of lords great and small, and not less redoubtable countesses and ladies, who shared in various measures whatever of power there was in Europe, and made it a hard time for all, clergy or laity, who had not a good sword to trust to. And at the head of this aristocracy, identified with its customs and feelings, battling hard with it for his place, stood the king or the emperor; no longer feeling himself the divinely appointed guardian of the Church and her canons—though Charlemagne's grand theory might survive, as it does still, in coronation services and court etiquette, but the feudal chief of a confederacy of ambitious barons; bullied by them, if weak; if strong, carrying out to the utmost the feudal maxims which favoured his power.

[1] Ingulph, a. 1071, p. 71.

Charlemagne had linked the episcopate to the crown, and so it had remained; and now the crown had changed its character, and with it the episcopate had become a feudal order. Two things were the practical belief of the day; first, that a bishop was the king's nominee, and secondly, that he was simply the king's vassal, deriving his authority from him, bound to his obedience and service, with as little qualification as a lay noble. Whatever other laws or authority a bishop had to acknowledge, his relation to the king and the great feudal body had a reality, a commonsense palpable truth about it, a consistency with the order of things which in matters of serious business would decide a man's conduct. It was a tie which made it mere romance and wildness for him to rebuke and punish vice, to defend the poor, to stir in good earnest against the corruption and worldliness of a system of which his lord and patron was head. For such a proceeding there would have been no name known but treason, the unpardonable crime of feudal days.

Further, the feudal relation which had grown up between the bishop and the crown, besides its influence on the episcopal office, affected very seriously the security of Church property. This became a distinct but very important point in the dispute. Part of this property was from the first given and accepted on feudal conditions; but the bulk of it was in a different case. It had been offered and consecrated to God and His service with a reality of sacrifice and surrender which we can hardly feel now. In the most solemn way possible all earthly claim to resume it had been renounced. But in time the conditions which were fairly attached to part were extended to the whole. It was not merely charged with certain services, such as were often reserved in the original grant, but claimed for a feudal superior in the same sense as a temporal fief. The king had become not merely the trustee but the lord of the Church lands; it might be

sacrilege, but on feudal principles it was not usurpation, when on the death or disobedience of a bishop he seized the revenues of the see. To this lordship, *under the circumstances*, the king had no right. It is hard, indeed, to say in the abstract where the right over property stops in the supreme power of the state, granting that it is irresponsible; but rights are created and governed by the admitted principles of the day, and at that time it was an admitted principle that the king was a responsible member of the Church and that Church property was sacred. It was going therefore against the convictions and feelings of the time; it was indirectly regaining a hold on what he was supposed to have surrendered; it was taking away a safeguard he professed to have given—when the king claimed feudal dominion over the lands of the Church.

Of these relations the expression and warrant was the form of investiture, with the attending homage. ‘ Prudent antiquitie ’, says our English lawyer, ‘ did for more solemnitie and better memorie of that which was to be done express substances under ceremonies ’. The ‘ substance ’ in this case was that the king gave away, not merely the royalties or the temporalities of the see or a certain worldly honour or jurisdiction, but *the bishopric;* he put into the bishop's hands not a sword or a sceptre but the symbols of his spiritual functions, the ring and the pastoral staff.

Such was the state of things when the contest about investitures began, in the middle of the eleventh century. The attack on them was a new line on the part of the Church party. Investiture was one of those practices which have their importance from the system in which they are found, altering their meaning as that system insensibly passes into another. It had begun early in connection with Charlemagne's theory of a Christian empire, and had continued as a ceremony unopposed and unnoticed; its meaning was vague—it was

sanctioned by the almost ecclesiastical office of the king or emperor; and doubtless there was many a bishop who liked the feudal effect thus given to Church dignities, who had no objection to call 'the alms and munificence of ancient kings, his barony and royal fief', so that he might ride at the head of his chivalry—an array as brave and gallant as the neighbouring earl's whom he had to keep at bay. The Church had acquiesced in the custom, for she had seen no evil in it. Her old recognized policy against the world had been to try to check *directly* the interference of the secular power in *elections* of the higher clergy. So things had gone on for above 200 years: canons had been framed; princes had resisted, yielded, made promises, and broken them: bishoprics were important offices—chaplains and court-clerks were useful, were importunate, and had ready money to offer: it was the old story over and over again; when the king was weak or threatened by danger, the theory at least of a free and canonical election was graciously acknowledged; when he was strong, laughed at. Churchmen protested loudly and hotly, or complained in secret. Still matters went on as before; but a free and canonical election was ever their hope, their watchword—the palladium of the purity of the Church: to be secured some day or other, on the faith of feudal kings, who were becoming more and more indisposed to part with any of their power, as great political objects, which gave increased value to that power, were generation after generation opening more distinctly to view. There could be no doubt which side was really gaining: free and canonical election was becoming more and more a dream, for bishops were not merely subjects, but vassals; what had free and canonical election to do with the king's vassals? Popes and councils and divines might preach and argue and decree about it to the end of time; but the phrase had come to sound like a worn-out formula: power was power, in spite of their protests, and it

was not in their hands. And meanwhile, as the terms on which a bishop received his office identified him more and more with the state nobility, the very notion of a bishop became degraded and secularized.

Such seems to have been the view of the earnest and clear-sighted men who headed the movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. What good was it repeating year after year ineffectual claims, asserting rights which were not denied but simply laughed at, even gaining concessions which were to exist only on parchment? To restore the lost feeling of the sanctity and heavenly mission of the episcopate—the tokens and cognisances, *divini signa decoris*, which connected it with the Apostles—this was what the times required. What matter who elected if they were merely to elect an ecclesiastical baron? Distinctly and unequivocally, before it was too late, the Church must be detached from feudalism; popular and kingly notions about bishops must be broken down; a point which would bring matters to issue must be fixed on and carried, and carried at all hazards and without mistake—carried through evil report and good report; if necessary, and it was necessary, through war, exile, and even death. If anything was to be done, they must strike a blow—must prove that priests as well as soldiers could act. They could not keep kings from meddling in elections; but they might keep bishops from receiving their offices on terms which fettered and lowered them. Abstract rights might not help them much; but they might fix on a *practice*, and draw upon it the strong and indignant feeling of Christendom. Investiture and homage, as they had long been exacted from the clergy, created not merely a spell and *prestige* in favour of feudal claims, but, according to prevailing principles, a real undeniable right. They were the links which bound the Church; and cost what it might—the Church was above all price—they must be snapped. It was no safe experiment, but they

had hit the blot; nothing shows it plainer than the rage and reluctance with which their opponents at length yielded. The emperor Henry V, when he had the Pope in prison, 'holding him fast', says his panegyrist, 'as Jacob did the Angel, and not letting him go till he gave him a blessing', could afford to let his captive bargain about free election—the 'blessing' which he wanted was to give him the right of investiture [1].

Such was the effort made against investiture. It was the effort necessary for the time to save the Church from falling—the course into which faithfulness and self-devotion in that day threw itself, the cause in which all high religious feelings, by instinct oftener than by any clear reason, found their symbol and representative. There were ideas of purity which were revolted, when hands consecrated to the holiest service were placed between those of the filthy and blood-stained, and surrendered also to *them*. There were yearnings after freedom, enthusiastic glimpses of the unutterable glory even of the Church militant which spurned at the notion of her being a 'handmaid' to mortal greatness. There were thoughts of our Lord's actual presence in the rites and voice of the Church which made the interference of secular power feel like a profanation. All these rose up in men's minds as the movement went on, and turned themselves with more or less success and consistency into arguments. They at least showed what was in men's minds, what was identified with the contest. And, in spite of irrelevant reasoning and weak points, the question was what it was felt to be, one of the deepest principle—a matter which could not rest any longer as it had done, whose consequences, of one kind or another, had come to the birth and could no longer be delayed. If investiture continued *now*, it was equivalent to surrendering the Christian law to those who hated it.

[1] Quoted in Will. Malms., *Gest. Reg.* l. v, § 420.

It was in vain, when the Church became alive to the real meaning of the dispute, that moderate and peaceful men, suspicious of great movements, keenly alive to what was wrong or questionable on their own side, appalled at the terrors of a struggle and hopeless of the strength of the Church to overthrow a custom so tenaciously held, took a middle line—drew distinctions and formed theories to elude its meaning. What did feudal kings care for theories? Canonists might refine in their schools on the possible or original meaning of the symbols, and urge that the staff might mean only temporal jurisdiction, that the ring could not mean anything sacramental in the hands of a layman, that symbols were but matters of opinion and were of little consequence so that right doctrines on the subject were maintained; doubtless by due limitations and distinctions a strong, perhaps irresistible, position might be taken on paper, if the war was only on paper. But their distinctions could not alter facts, or force the practical belief of the multitude. Argue and explain as they would, William the Conqueror and the German emperors knew very well what *they* meant by investiture, and the opinion of their age bore them out. When William told Lanfranc that he 'would have all the crosiers in England in his own hand', it was in no meagre and restricted sense that he intended his words to be taken. The Church had to deal not with abstractions and theories but with a great established practical system, acted out day after day by living men. She was in danger of becoming feudalized in spirit and outward form. Bishoprics and canonries were being made the prey not of a considerate legislature providing for vested interests but of the more summary and urgent avarice of spendthrift soldiers. The higher clergy were becoming more and more worldly and profligate. If this was to be checked, it must be by other means than by explaining away the meaning of investiture. Ivo, bishop of Chartres, who was one of the repre-

sentatives of this moderate party—Anselm's friend, and fellow-pupil at Bec, a brave and earnest churchman, too—reasoned plausibly enough in the abstract that there was a ground on which investiture was defensible[1];—that it was folly to sacrifice religion to a point of positive order. Doubtless, as he said, St Augustine made great account of the claims of human law; doubtless the Pharisees in their day 'strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel'; probably also he only spoke the truth when he complained that great scandals were left unredressed during the struggle, and that the ministers of the Roman See often behaved very badly; but the question on which all hinged yet remained, whether he or the Pope's party best understood the feelings and necessities of the time. He only proved—what they had good reason to know as well as he—that they were playing a strong game, were making great sacrifices. It might be that the object was worth them, and required them; it might be that it *did* matter whether investiture were granted by this or that symbol. It certainly did so happen that those most interested, the feudal lords, thought so. Ivo, however, himself, as the contest went on, came to see that the point was not so indifferent or secondary, as he had once represented it[2].

It was on this question that, after the death of William Rufus, Anselm carried on his battle against feudalism under the new king, Henry I. As far as we can see, it was William's tyranny in driving Anselm out of England that gave him this new ground. For it was during his exile that the canons against investiture, which hitherto the Popes had not cared to enforce in England, were brought under his notice; and in them he gained a distinct expression for his principles, the want of which he had felt in his resistance to William.

It was a strange destiny which seemed to pursue

[1] Ivo Carnot., *Ep.* 60.
[2] Id., *Ep.* 236. De Marca, viii, xx, 5.

him. His old enemy was dead, but the conflict was to be renewed at once, with scarce a breathing time, against a fresh one. Dispute and turmoil were still to be his lot. The contrast is indeed a striking one between Anselm the writer and Anselm the archbishop. Most great men have one sphere and one function; and accordingly, however diversified their powers or history, everything about them seems subordinate to this one end. Whatever bears not on it may be matter for curiosity or give life and reality to the broad popular notion of them; but it is no essential feature of their portrait. The statesman may be a scholar; the orator have an ambition to shine also as a man of science or a poet or, it may be, as a theologian; but their feats or failures alike are absorbed into or drop off from their memory, and will be forgotten before the fashion of their clothes, the look of their face, or the tone of their voice. The law of their course forbids them the coveted place in another fraternity besides their own. Many men indeed have, like St Athanasius, worked out their peculiar task *both* by their writings and by the influence of a powerful character during an eventful life; but their actions and writings have been the one the complement and illustration of the other; they have led directly to the same point of sight; they cannot be separated; they are promise and fulfilment, text and commentary. And, again, there is sometimes a kind of contrast between men's lives and writings which arises from a want of harmony between them—painful or amusing, as the case may be, where the deed is inconsistent with the word, or where a man's feebleness and helplessness of speech, his rude phrase and stammering lips, stand out in ludicrous juxtaposition with his practical clearness and energy. But this is not the contrast we are speaking of in the case of St Anselm: it is the contrast of different and almost opposite characters in the same person. He is at once the deep and original metaphysician, intensely absorbed with

abstract problems the most baffling to men's reason and trying to their faith—in a rude age and with slender appliances, by the help of St Augustine and his own thoughts, facing them boldly, and marking out a new and definite course which was to be followed in schools of the Church for centuries: and he is also the active champion and leader of the Church party in the West, who has at once to bear the 'stress and burden' of the English primacy in a newly organized and unsettled Church, to carry on the routine and detail of business, and, further, to contend singly against overwhelming odds for an obnoxious principle, to raise a feeling and form a party, where at starting he was alone. There is a sort of instinct which disjoins and opposes the speculative and practical, and where it finds the one is surprised to find the other. Such works as the *Monologium* and *Proslogium* seem to fix their author's place. Calm profound *a-priori* speculations on the most sacred foundations of all religion—which, issuing from the densest gloom of the Middle Ages and clothed in their grotesque though scientific diction, arrested the attention of Leibnitz, and are making their writer's name a familiar and respected one in the schools of Germany and France—they mark him out as belonging to those who live apart, who work for mankind in secret, whose memories, known to the world by their writings, are shrouded from popular curiosity in a sort of mythical vagueness, as a subtle teacher, whose very sentences are weighed with heed—fitly placed where the great poet has placed him—in the consecrated brotherhood of those who have especially ministered God's gifts of reason—prophets and preachers, historians and philosophers, men of the schools, and the cloister:

> Natan profeta, e 'l Metropolitano
> Crisostomo, ed Anselmo, e quel Donato,
> Che alla prim' arte degnò poner mano—

But such a one we do not expect to meet with

also on the turbulent stage of English history, in company with the practical, the intrepid, the far-sighted rulers of the multitude—influencing and encountering the powers of the world—the fellow-champion of Hildebrand and Becket, the mate and rival of our Norman kings. The effect is much as if we could imagine that Bishop Butler had fought and suffered for the Church against the Puritans, or Archbishop Laud had written the *Analogy*.

Not that there is any great mystery in this, or that Anselm possessed any very wonderful versatility or variety of talent. Well as he acquitted himself when called to act in public, he never changed the character which he had formed in his days of peace. He always continued to look on his vocation in the world as that of the theologian and the ascetic. In the very tug and crisis of the battle, when standing face to face with what we call the realities of life, man of business and action as he seemed, he was still in reality the devout and enthusiastic metaphysician. In the hall at Rockingham or the cloister of Canterbury or the palace of the Lateran, journeying along the 'rugged and ruinous ways' to Italy, as well as in his Campanian monastery, with its mountains and sweet cool air [1], his thoughts without effort disengaged themselves from those absorbing interests which seemed at stake, to 'fly back to their sacred and remembered spring'—the deep things of God and the soul. To the last, on his death-bed, it was evident that he considered it his especial work to unravel and communicate high and difficult truths. Nor was he wrong. He was not a statesman but a monk. The secret of his victory, of his high and noble bearing in the world, of his dignity and self-possession, of his clear-sighted decision, of his firmness and readiness, of that unbroken calm which seemed in so undefinable a way to be about him—the secret of all this lay not in any unusual proportion of those powers which enable men of the world to charm or overawe

[1] Eadmer, *De Vit. Ans.*, p. 20.

their fellows but in his thorough earnestness and self-devotion, in that completeness of character which by dint of continual and genuine self-mastery has become fitted for every kind of service, because it has really surrendered every end but one. And so, when called to a new sphere, he was ready and qualified for it : he at once recognized his place and took it. The scene was changed, but the man was the same. All that he brought to meet it was his former fidelity and patience, his unexcited and commonplace sense of duty, the unconscious heroism which had been growing up in him in secret—*fortezza, ed umiltate, e largo core*, and the vivid and constant certainty that, come what might, he had chosen the winning side. And thus, monk and schoolman as he was, he was not discomfited by the jeers of William Rufus and his court, or surprised to find himself wresting from the 'great King Henry' one of the dearest privileges of feudal royalty.

The fact of this contrast—that there is so little visible connection between Anselm the theologian and Anselm the archbishop—is an instructive one. The cause of 'ecclesiastical liberty' was not of interest only to men of statesmanlike powers—whose line was action, command, and policy—in whom a great and noble cause, to be battled for in the world against selfishness and power, was of itself sufficient to rouse enthusiasm and enlist their whole souls, for Anselm certainly belonged not to this class. Yet no man fought more sturdily or heartily, with less doubt as to the importance of his quarrel, with greater readiness to risk and suffer everything for it, than he did; and that not as a tool or blind partisan, for no one prompted him, and the court of Rome as well as the English bishops left him very much to fight his own battle. In his case, certainly, it was no political end, however good and high, which moved him. The excitements of the strife, the *certaminis gaudia*, had little charm for him. Nothing can account for his line of conduct but the calm, ever-present, con-

viction that those high interests which filled his thoughts in the cell and before the altar were in visible and open jeopardy in the feudal palace.

Our readers, however, know something of Anselm, and we need not say more about him; his antagonist we must introduce at somewhat greater length.

Henry Beauclerk was the youngest of the Conqueror's sons, and not the least remarkable of that remarkable family, who collectively present a fair specimen of the race of stirring and adventurous men of whom they were the head—a race whose banners in the eleventh century had been seen in almost every country round the Mediterranean—*gens fere orbem terrarum bello pervagata*, who had met and humbled alike Greek and Latin emperors, soldans of Syria and Africa, and had set up their thrones east, west, and south, in Russia and England, in Naples, Palermo, and Antioch; at once the unscrupulous persecutors of the Church and its most enthusiastic liegemen and soldiers. The three brothers were all of them restless, daring, and ambitious; full of that wild eagerness of character which threw itself, with the same reality for the moment, into devotion, crime, and romantic enterprise, and changed at once from merriment and pleasantry into brutal ferocity. But otherwise they were very different. Robert, the model of courtesy, the fiery and dashing knight, who had never met his match in 'Paynim land or Christendom', the hero of the first crusade, with a soldier's kindheartedness and frankness had all a soldier's licence, and, except in war, was a general laughing-stock for his inconceivable weakness and indolence. William, as brave and enterprising and far more profligate, had none of his feebleness; in his headlong vehemence there was foresight, quick intelligence, and steady decision. Henry had been schooled by his fortunes. In his youth he was the scholar of the family, the man of peace and studious tastes, the frequenter of learned companies, the dabbler in classical quotations and

snatches of philosophy, whose attainments, if they were somewhat 'tumultuary'—if, like Charlemagne, he seldom ventured 'to read aloud or to chant except in an undertone',[1] were yet sufficient —in a prince—to vindicate the 'fair clerk's' right to his name. Yet he was no mere idle dilettante or pedant. However loudly his rough brothers might laugh, when they heard the saws about 'illiterate kings being crowned asses' with which he used to entertain his practical but not very accomplished parent, the dealer in proverbs was shrewd and wily withal. His was not a speculative and abstract love of philosophy which would be contented in the retirement of the bower or cloister; he was not without hopes that England would some day be Plato's blissful commonwealth, where a philosopher should be king, or the king a philosopher. His father was alive to his talents: 'Never mind, child, you will be king yet' was the consolatory prediction with which he bade his son dry his tears when he found him once weeping at some affront from his brothers.

His father's death left him a person of some consequence, either as a friend or a prize. 'He had his father's blessing, and his mother's inheritance, and much treasure withal to depend upon'; and with this, though without any territory, he thought he could defy his brothers and hold the balance between them. His plan was to support Robert; he was the least formidable, and was easily worked upon; Henry's firmness and longsightedness might temper his softness. But Robert, though gentle and weak, knew well the value of money, and could listen to slanderers. Henry made the inexcusable mistake of leaving his secret of strength, his 3000 marks, within Robert's grasp, while he went over into England on his brother's service;

[1] William of Malmsbury copies Eginhard's words about Charlemagne. Will. Malms., l. v, § 390. Eginh. *Vit. C. M.*, § 26.

when he returned he found that Robert had made use of him in another way—the 3000 marks were gone irrecoverably, squandered on Robert's mercenaries. His hopes of influence thus rudely put an end to, 'perhaps', says William of Malmsbury, 'he took it unkindly, but he held his peace'. After experiencing more of Robert's ingratitude, he accepted an invitation from William; but William was satisfied when he had got him away from Normandy; and, after a year of want and disappointed expectation, he escaped across the channel to Robert, whose flattering tongue changed as soon as he was once more in his power. Thus he lived, bandied about from one brother to the other, each disliking him equally but afraid to trust him with the other. It was in vain that he tried to win Robert's confidence, that he saved Rouen for him, that he tossed traitors over the walls into the Seine, so zealous was he in his cause; Robert requited him by turning him out of the city he had preserved. In the end both brothers joined against him. 'And so', says his historian, 'having shown himself loyal and active on behalf of each of them, they plundered the young man of all he had, and trained him up to greater prudence by lack of victuals.'

He took to his lesson kindly and learnt it well. At length William was killed. Robert was at the time far away. He had gone some years before to the East. The bravest of the Christian host, he had gained great glory against the infidels; the crown of Jerusalem was pressed upon him, but home and rest were dearer; he was now on his way back, wooing a fair lady of Italy and refreshing himself after his toils. Meanwhile his quiet brother had been gaining popularity, forming a party, and biding his time in England. The news of William's death brought with it the expectation of universal confusion; most of the court dispersed hurriedly to their homes to prepare for the worst. Henry

was on the spot and ready. The day William was killed he claimed the keys of his treasury; the keeper opposed him, and reminded him that he had sworn homage to Robert. Henry answered by drawing his sword; he was not going to lose his father's sceptre by 'frivolous procrastination'. Robert's title, after all, was an imperfect one; his father had expressly excluded him from the crown of England; and any how it rested with the bishops and great men to accept or refuse him. Personally there were many things against him—his indolent spendthrift ways, his childish feebleness. Above all, he was away; 'the great men knew not what had become of him', and England wanted a governor at once. Henry was willing to be king of England; he was a fit man to be a king, resolute and steady, and, except with the riotous companions of King Rufus, popular. Even the Saxons felt kindly towards a born Englishman, a son too of William *the King;* and he was a friend of justice and quiet; his soul abhorred the loud, coarse, impudent, profligacy which had been rampant in his brother's palaces. The whole crew of the dead king's companions, male and female, were at once mercilessly chased away; 'the use of lights at night restored in the court'. He promised a strong and righteous government, fair customs to the crown vassals, to the people the 'old laws of King Edward', and liberty to the Church. The clergy and great men unanimously agreed to have Henry. Three days after William's death he was 'consecrated to be king' at Westminster with great 'rejoicings of the people'.[1] Robert hastened home, but it was too late; his chance was gone, and his place filled by one who could keep it. The smooth, pleasant, clerkly youth, 'of fairest form and manners, and most gentyl and free'[2], who had so assiduously courted his service and been flouted

[1] Ord. Vit., x. c. 14, p. 88, ed. Le Prevost. Will. Malmsb.
[2] Robert of Gloucester.

by him in return so lightly, was now master of the game—a king in good earnest, no trifler with titles or hero of forays or tilt-yards; and he had not forgotten what he had learned or suffered of Robert. He was still the man of smiles and decencies; he could wait for his object, but not forgive or relent. 'Silly Robelin Courte-hose'—he had but to be left to himself, to work out ample vengeance for his brother. He first sold his claim to England for a pension of 3000 marks; but he was a gallant and courteous knight, and could not refuse a lady—at the suit of Henry's queen he gave it up. Robert knew not how to govern his dukedom. Normandy was in wild disorder, and he helpless and listless; it was a sore sight, and Henry took it much to heart; his brother was disgracing himself and ruining a noble province, 'playing the monk instead of the count'; he expostulated—'once blandly by words, more than once roughly by war'; but Robert was incorrigible. Henry was at last prevailed upon—it was very painful, but necessary—to sacrifice his 'indiscreet brotherly affection to endangered justice': there were maxims of Cæsar to justify him; one after another he won the towns and castles of Normandy. Robert wandered about, deserted, begging his bread; at last he made one desperate effort; it ended in a captivity of thirty years. 'He was kept in free custody till the day of his death', says Henry's astute and ironical panegyrist, 'by his brother's laudable kindness (*pietate*); for he suffered no evil except solitude, if it could be called solitude where his keepers were all attention to him, and where he had plenty of jollities and dainty dinners'.[1] Poor Robert doubtless had a keen relish for 'jollities and dainty dinners'; but coupled with 'free custody'—stories too there are of something rougher still, of 'strong prison' and blindness; but, even with *free* custody, they could have been but a poor solace to the fiery

[1] Will. Malmsb., § 389, 395.

spirit of the most gallant of the crusaders. He dragged on through the thirty years in miserable fretfulness; and at last (so the story went), in a burst of rage at some fancied insult from Henry, the 'dastard clerkling who had outwitted him', he vowed that he would never taste food again, and died 'pining and angry with himself, cursing the day of his birth'.[1] Dreary finish of his brilliant and gay career; melancholy waste of gallantry and enterprise, of talent, eloquence, and wit—for for these also Robert was famous in his time. The 'clerkling's' revenge was a stern and complete one. Robert survived all his fellow-travellers to Palestine. 'Alas', says the old English chronicler, moralizing on the change since he fought with them at Antioch and Ascalon, 'him had better have been king of the Holy Land'; he refused to be 'the highest prince in Christendom when God would, and took to rest; therefore did God send him rest in prison'.

Henry had his difficulties; but he was fully able to cope with them. The line that he had taken, his unmilitary character, his reforms and popular concessions, the prospect of a strict government, his professed sympathy with the clergy and the Anglo-Saxon population, his quiet Saxon queen with her monastic education and tastes, drew on him the angry contempt of the great Norman nobility. They had been taken by surprise—many of them at least—in electing him. Robert's easy sway was much more suited to their unruly independence. Till after the conquest of Normandy 'both while a youth and as king', says a contemporary, 'Henry was held in the utmost contempt'. But he was not a king to be despised, as his barons found to their cost: 'the Lion of Justice'[2] could use his fangs and claws on

[1] Matt. Paris, a. 1134, and note to Hearne's Robert of Gloucester, ii, 426.

[2] John of Salisb., *Polycr.*, vi, 18.

occasion. High aristocratical Montgomerys and Grentmaisnils and De Warennes might sneer in his presence at sober 'Godric Godfadyr and his wife Godiva'[1] and feel very little respect for a king who had a taste for natural history and collected a menagerie at Woodstock, who encouraged his young nobility to puzzle cardinals in logic, instead of upsetting knights in the lists; he was not put out of temper; he only received their sarcasms with an 'ominous laughter' (*formidabiles cachinnos ejiciebat*), laughter which, like his praise, was the sure forerunner of mischief; and in due time showed them, either by war or 'modestly and in courts of justice', that Godric Godfadyr could do other things than amuse himself with his camels and porcupines at Woodstock. But Henry deserves his own praise; he made himself felt in England for good as well as for evil. He at least allowed no oppression but his own. The castles, 'filled with devils and evil men' which were the curse of England in Stephen's time, were not raised in Henry's. If the poor felt his severity, they also felt his protection:

> He was in thought, day and night,
> To save poor men from rich men's unright.[2]

The Saxon chronicler, who records the Leicestershire assize where the king's justiciary 'hanged more thieves than were ever known before'—many of them, true men said, very unjustly, and who complains of the misery of that 'heavy year' ('first the wretched people are bereaved of their property, and then are they slain') speaks probably the voice of the lower orders in his concluding eulogy on Henry. 'A good man he was, and there was great dread of him; no man durst do wrong with another in his time. Peace he made for man and beast.

[1] Will. Malmsb., § 394, 409, 406.
[2] Robert of Gloucester.

Whoso bore his burden of gold and silver, no man durst say ought to him but good.'

His position in respect of the aristocracy dictated his Church policy. His jealous and quarrelsome nobility, with their feuds and seignorial rights, threatened to split up the kingdom into a number of independent principalities like the great fiefs of France. He saw clearly enough that this would be ruinous—that *the thing* for England was to make the crown all-powerful, and next, as far as could be, respectable and popular. And for this he could not spare the Church. To a certain point she was his natural ally—a force powerful, both from its activity and from its dead weight also, on the side of order. Her higher clergy were an aristocracy of peace, contrasted with the military aristocracy—not, like the barons, hereditary, but continually replenished from the tried servants of the crown, and defenceless if refractory. Moreover, the great want of kings is money, and money was more easily to be drawn from the Church than from the spendthrift and pugnacious barons. Henry was quite content that the Church should be strong and honourable as in the days of his father; he did not mean to seize or farm her bishoprics and abbeys, and had no notion of encouraging disreputable clerks like Ralph Flambard to bring shame on their patron by their impudent profligacy. Almost his first measure was one of justice on this grand delinquent. Ralph, now Bishop of Durham, was seized and shut up in the Tower of London—'the people rejoicing as if a raging lion had been caught'[1]; but he shortly after escaped, to play fresh pranks in Normandy. We cannot dismiss him without giving the account of his escape, from the Norman monk Ordericus[2].

The crafty prelate managed to get forth from the rigour of the prison-house, and by means of friends cunningly contrived

[1] Anselm., *Ep.* iv, 2. [2] Order. Vit., x, 18.

his escape. For he was deft and a man of words, and, though cruel and fierce-tempered, yet was he bountiful withal, and generally of a merry humour, so that to many he was pleasant and right dear. By the king's order he had daily two shillings to his board, wherewith, by the help of his friends, he did disport himself (*tripudiabat*) in the prison, and ordered a noble banquet to be served daily for himself and his guards. On a certain day a rope was brought in to him in a flagon of wine, (*Proh dolus!* exclaims the shocked librarian of Malmsbury[1], in his account of the adventure), and a dainty feast was made of the bishop's bounty. The guards ate with him, and were made merry by deep draughts of potent wine; who being exceeding drunk and snoring carelessly, the bishop fastened the rope to the pillar which was in the middle of the tower window, and, taking his pastoral staff with him, he slid down the rope. But, because he had forgotten to guard his hands with gloves, they were cut to the very bone by the roughness of the rope; and moreover, for that the rope did not reach to the ground, the fat prelate (*corpulentus flamen*) came down with a heavy fall, and being nearly dashed to pieces began to groan most piteously—

His friends, however, were in waiting with horses to convey him to the coast, and he escaped. It was some consolation to the population at large that he had not got off quite scathless. 'If he hurt his arms and scraped the skin off his hands', says William of Malmsbury, with a chuckle of satisfaction, 'little does the people care for that'.

Henry meant in his own way to reform the Church. He was ready to appoint worthy and respectable men to preside over her government—friends and chaplains of his own, discreet, able men of business, who had travelled and been charged with embassies and learned something of the world, and who by their princely state and magnificence and public spirit would keep up the dignity of the Church and their order. Such were Henry's favourite bishops. Roger, afterwards styled the Great, was a poor chantry-priest in a suburb of Caen when he first took Henry's fancy—then a needy ill-used younger brother with a small

[1] W. Malmsb., § 394.

following—by his expeditious mode of performing divine service; Henry thought he would make a good soldier's chaplain, and took him into his service. Roger proved useful: he kept the purse-strings discreetly, and he rose with his patron's fortunes to be Bishop of Salisbury, one of the most trusted and wealthiest subjects in England. If he was rather more of a man of the world than became a bishop, if he loved riches and was reputed somewhat free in his life, yet he was known to begin the day with the due religious offices, and his public works were monuments of his taste and liberality. Such another was Robert Bloet, Bishop of Lincoln: a contemporary's recollections of him might almost stand for a sketch of Wolsey's fortunes.

In my boyhood and youth (he says), when I used to see the glory of our Bishop Robert—his knights so gallant, his pages of noblest birth, his stud of the greatest value, his gold and gilt plate, the profusion of his table, the state of his attendants, his wardrobe of purple and fine linen, I could conceive no greater happiness. How could I feel otherwise when every one, even those who used to lecture in the schools on despising the world, paid their court to him, and he himself, regarded as the father and lord of all, most dearly loved and embraced the world? But, when I grew up, I heard tell of foulest reproaches cast in his teeth, which would have half-killed me, beggar as I was, to have endured before so great an audience; and so I began to hold that inestimable blessing at a cheaper rate.

And finally I will tell what happened to him before his death,—he, the justiciary of all England, the terror of every one, was in the last year of his life twice sued by the king through some petty justice, and twice cast with every circumstance of indignity. His distress was such that, while with him as his archdeacon at dinner, I have seen him burst into tears; and, when asked the reason, 'My attendants', he said, 'once used to be dressed in costly stuffs, now fines to the king, whose favour I have ever studied, have reduced them to lamb skins.' And so completely did he despair of the king's friendship that, when told of the high terms in which the king had spoken of him, he said, with a sigh: 'The king never praises any of his servants whom he does not mean to ruin utterly.' For king Henry, if I may say so, bore a grudge bitterly, and was very hard to fathom (*nimis inscrutabilis*).

A few days after he fell down in a fit of apoplexy at Woodstock, and died.[1]

But, further, the king was a man of learning, and he would not be without learned bishops also; he brought Gilbert the Universal, 'whose equal in science was not to be found between England and Rome', from the schools of Nevers to be Bishop of London. Gilbert justified his patron's choice, and moreover left at his death immense wealth, which Henry seized—'the bishop's boots also, filled with gold and silver, being carried to the Exchequer'. But at the same time Henry could fully appreciate a higher and stricter character, and it was quite to his taste to have the metropolitan see filled by such a man as Anselm.

Such was Henry Beauclerk and his policy. On coming to the throne he at once recalled the archbishop. Anselm found things changed; from William's reckless tyranny, England had passed under the rule of a long-sighted statesman who was bent on crushing licence; a man above the gross vices of his time, utterly despising the fashionable taste for military glitter and fame, professedly a man of peace but not afraid of war, the avowed patron and friend of the Church. The prospect seemed hopeful; Anselm's plans of reform in the English Church might now be carried into effect; Henry, from his gentler temper, was more likely to enter into them than his father. But very few days passed before formidable difficulties began to show themselves. Anselm, however, threw himself heart and soul into Henry's interest; mediated between him and his suspicious subjects; received in the name of the nobility of the realm and the great body of the people the king's plighted hand and his promise to govern by 'just and holy laws'[2]; accom-

[1] Henry of Huntingdon, *De Contemptu Mundi*, in Wharton, ii, 694.

[2] Eadm., *Hist. Nov.*, p. 59, who is the authority for what follows.

panied him to the field when Robert invaded England; kept the changeable and faithless barons to their duty, and induced Robert to consent to a reconciliation. In the only critical moment of Henry's reign he owed his fortunes mainly to the archbishop.

The difficulties alluded to arose from the question of investiture. Henry, following the analogy of lay fiefs, required that Anselm should receive his archbishopric afresh from the hands of his new lord, and do homage for it, according to the usage of former kings. As we have already said, these feudal customs had been hitherto exercised without protest in England; Anselm himself had received investiture from William Rufus. But the case was now altered; he had assisted at councils where the canons against investiture were confirmed and republished, where those who gave and those who received it were alike excommunicated. He had now but one course—to obey the canons, and refuse Henry's demand. His experience, too, in his last dispute, had taught him the real importance of the question, and he had made up his mind, while supported by the Pope, to hazard everything in trying it.

The archbishop's objection to investiture was a sufficiently provoking derangement to Henry's plans. To give up what his predecessors had possessed was a check at starting; to resist was to come into collision with the body he wished of all things to have on his side; with Anselm, too, an indomitable fearless old man, a confessor in the freshness of triumph. Henry could not yet afford to break with him openly, but he had not the slightest intention of yielding the point: 'it was worth half his realm'. Negociation with the Pope opened a hopeful prospect of delay; it was a course to which the archbishop could not object; if it gained nothing else, time of itself was well worth gaining. Anselm knew well that this was 'mere trifling'; but his position was obedience to superior authority, and, besides, he did

not wish to bring suspicion on his loyalty. It was settled, therefore, that matters should remain in abeyance till an answer could be received from Rome.

Henry stood on the 'usages of the realm'; he was doing no more than all his predecessors, Saxon and Norman, had done, requiring no more than Anselm himself had yielded to William Rufus. He was anxious, he said, to honour the Roman Church as his father had done, to profit by the presence and counsel of his archbishop; but, come what might, his 'usages', the honour of his crown, must remain inviolate; their surrender could not be a question with him; he did not send to Rome to ask them as a concession from the Pope but to see what could be done to enable Anselm with a good conscience to submit to them. If the Church decrees could not be dispensed with, he regretted it; he was loth to depart from the Pope's obedience; but, whatever resolution Anselm or the Pope might adopt, he must abide by the 'usages'.

Henry had this strong advantage, that he could say that the Church claim was a new one. He could seem to others and to himself to be appealing against a theory to realities and immemorial practice. 'Saw you ever, since you were children, ring or staff given away in England, except by the king? Whom can you conceive doing it but him?' Long before Norman times—in the days of King Edward—back to the old time of Charlemagne—kings had used their right, and bishops never resisted: why should this objection be now for the first time thought of? If the usage was wrong now, why was it ever permitted? Why should Henry, the friend and protector of the Church, be the first to forfeit his privileges? What was this new claim but an open encroachment, a lowering of temporal honour? And, what were Church decrees that they should, at this time of day, pretend to meddle with what all men accounted most sublime and great—the glory of the king's majesty?

Anselm did innovate certainly: loyal, unworldly, man as he was, he was giving a bold and rude shake to Henry's royalty. But time had been innovating before him—time and feudalism had been encroaching on the Church; and, if she was to be even with them, she must bring up her way at once, and therefore—though principles as old as Christianity were appealed to—abruptly. Quietly, silently, for years and years before his day, society with its feelings and opinions had been going through its unceasing flux, changing, drifting, settling anew from day to day; what had at length come of all this was that kings and nobles thought that bishoprics were their own, to do what they pleased with; what seemed likely was that soon the rest of the world, lay and clerical, would come to think so too. These venerable, long endured, 'customs' had been hinting, insinuating, at last plainly telling men so; leave them alone a little longer and their evidence would be irresistible. Since they were fresh and young, every thing around them was altered. For our own part, we are not very much disposed to quarrel, in its own age and circumstances, with what it would be a convenient anachronism to call the Erastianism of Charlemagne. His was, on the whole, a real, earnest, Christian government, doing according to its light a great religious work. If he meddled in a high and summary way in most Church matters, it was with the hearty zeal of one who felt her service to be in truth his business and mission, and his highest honour. But Charlemagne, with his capitularies collected from the canons of councils and his 'missi' travelling all over Europe to execute them, was among things departed and obsolete, known only to antiquarians or dimly celebrated by minstrels and romancers fabling of the majesty and pomp—*μεγαλοσχήμονα κἀρχαιοπρεπῆ τιμάν*—of the old Christian emperor. The living ruling powers of Europe were of a different mould—haughty and proud lords of the world, soldiers and hunters, 'fathers of the

hare and high deer'; at best wise and cunning statesmen: a new dynasty of force, forgetful of the Power more than human—minister of blessing, teacher of wisdom and mysteries—the child of heaven as well as earth, which had in old time upheld their thrones and which they were recompensing now with insults and bonds:

νέοι γὰρ οἰακονόμοι
κρατοῦσ' Ὀλύμπου· νεοχμοῖς δὲ δὴ νόμοις Ζεὺς ἀθέτως κρατύνει·
τὰ πρὶν δὲ πελώρια νῦν ἀϊστοῖ.

It was time for the Church to claim what she could no longer leave in their hands, if she might yet dream of her old functions. Whatever disadvantages she might have entailed on herself, she had at least a right, had she but courage, to save her divine commission and powers from being accounted mere human gifts for human purposes. Usages of England—the honour of kings—were serious things, and not to be wantonly tampered with. Henry, practical man that he was, was right in thinking that they were not to be sacrificed to a theory. But there were serious and practical things in the world besides King Henry's usages; there were other great works going on, other deep matters filling men's thoughts, besides the establishment of his power: the Church, too, had her ends, her customs, laws, dignities, not on paper but in the living world, which to some men were too precious to be sacrificed even to King Henry's glory and policy. She, too, had to preserve, and, more than this, to restore.

But to return to our narrative. Henry's envoys returned, probably with all the success he expected. The Pope was inflexible, but his long letter against investitures had as little effect on the king. Henry, without taking the slightest notice of it, turned upon Anselm, coaxing, threatening, bullying, sending message after message through the bishops, with the object, if he would not submit, of getting him out of England. He was loth to repeat in earnest his

brother's rough game; it was his way to 'worry rather with words than with arms'[1]; but he tried to intimidate. Anselm, however, was immoveable: 'he could not leave his church—he had work to do there, and there he must abide till forced from it'. At last a new embassy was proposed; men were to go of higher note—perhaps the Pope would be moved, when he was told that, unless he relented, Anselm must be driven out of England and the Roman See lose the obedience of the whole realm, with the advantage which it yearly derived from it. Anselm was to send his representatives, if it were but to testify to the king's determination—a trusted monk named Baldwin, and another. The king's commissioners were three bishops; the chief was William Rufus's old envoy, Gerard, now Archbishop of York, a man of slippery doubtful ways, and unhappy end, shrewd and plausible and with much reputation for learning. 'No man in England might be of more use to the Church', writes Anselm to the Pope, 'and I hope in God he has the will, as he has the power.'[2] But he was an ambitious and unsteady churchman, as easily tempted as he was easily frightened. He had a most sensitive jealousy of the primacy of Canterbury, and was not very nice in displaying it. On one occasion when the English bishops met in synod—so went the story among the canons of York—and a seat of solitary dignity raised above the rest was prepared for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Gerard in high dudgeon kicked it over with an oath 'in the vulgar tongue' (*Dei odium ei qui sic paraverat vulgariter imprecans*), and would not take his seat except as co-ordinate in honour. The other two were Robert of Chester and Herbert of Norwich, men of very questionable respectability.

They returned with fresh letters for the king and the archbishop; and the nobility and higher clergy were immediately summoned to meet in London.

[1] Robert of Gloucester. [2] *Ep.*, iii, 48.

They found that the king refused to communicate the contents of his letter, but again required unqualified submission from Anselm under pain of expulsion. To Anselm the Pope wrote that he had peremptorily refused to comply with Henry's demands.

Only a few days before (he said) it had been again decreed in council that churches and church-benefices were not to be received by the clergy from lay hands. This practice was the root of simony—a temptation to the clergy to pay court to power. Princes must not come between the Church and her offices, nor make themselves channels of what is really Christ's gift and has his stamp upon it. For (he continues), as through Christ alone the first door is opened by baptism into the Church and the last by death into life eternal, so through Christ alone should the door-keeper of his fold be appointed, by whom not for the hire of the flock but for Christ's sake the sheep may go in and out till they are led to everlasting life.

So wrote Paschal to the archbishop; the letter was handed about and eagerly read; and in a few days it came out that he had written to the king to the same effect. Matters seemed to have come to a crisis, when the three bishops came forward to make an important communication—they had received, they said, privately and secretly from the Pope a verbal message to Henry, to assure him that 'so long as he acted as a good king, and appointed religious prelates, the Pope would not enforce the decrees against investiture; but he was obliged to hold another language in public, and could not give the privilege in writing, lest other princes should use it to the prejudice of the Church.' This startling announcement, to which the king's envoys pledged their faith and honour as bishops, raised a storm of debate in the assembly. Anselm's representatives had heard nothing of the message, which was inconsistent with everything which had passed in public between them and the Pope. Baldwin especially was indignant: the bishops, he said, were breaking their canonical allegiance, trifling with

the Pope's honour. The altercation became hot and fast; Baldwin insisted that nothing could supersede the authority of documents sealed with the Pope's signet; the king's party were fierce and insulting in their rejoinder: 'The word of three bishops ought to weigh more than bescribbled sheepskins with a lump of lead at the bottom, backed by the testimony of two paltry monks, who, when they renounced the world, lost all weight as evidence in business of the world.' 'But this is no secular matter' said Baldwin. 'Sir', was the answer, 'we know you to be discreet and a man of business, yet still even order requires that we should set more by the evidence of an archbishop and two bishops than by yours.' 'But what becomes of the evidence of the letters?' 'When we refuse to receive the evidence of monks against bishops', was the sneering reply, 'how could we receive that of sheep-skins?' A cry of disgust and indignation burst from the monks who were looking on. 'Woe, woe!' they exclaimed; 'are not the Gospels written on sheepskins?'

Thus things were more embarrassed than ever, and the archbishop thrown into a most painful state of uncertainty. What was he to believe, the Pope's letters or the solemnly pledged word of the bishops? It was plain that things could not go on without a fresh embassy, and a fresh embassy accordingly was sent. Anselm wrote, detailing the transaction and earnestly begging for some clear and definite directions how he was to act.

> I am not afraid (he wrote) of banishment or poverty or torments or death: for all these, God comforting me, my heart is ready, in obedience to the Apostolic See and for the liberty of my mother the Church—all I ask is certainty, that I may know without doubt what course I ought to hold by your authority.[1]

It may occur perhaps to some of our readers, did the bishops after all speak the truth? Was this a trick

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 73.

and manœuvre of the Pope to keep on good terms with England during his struggle with the emperor? The supposition seems to us to be quite negatived, both by Paschal's personal character and by the subsequent events. Paschal certainly was not a great man; he was diplomatic and wavering, and dull to the claims of his own cause except when at his very door; but still he was in earnest, and there is no reason to suspect him of an act of such incredible folly, which could not be kept secret and must prove ruinous to his influence and cause whenever known. Further, he at once and most solemnly denied it, and excommunicated the bishops, without any protest as far as appears on their part; on the contrary, both Eadmer and William of Malmsbury[1] take it for granted that at the time they were writing the bishops' story was a notorious and confessed falsehood; nor is there anything in the character of the envoys to redeem their credit.

During the absence of the new embassy, things were taking a turn in England which Henry could scarcely have expected. He had early in his reign nominated one William Gifford, who had repeatedly held the office of chancellor under the preceding kings, to the bishopric of Winchester. Gifford refused to receive it, as it must come to him from the hands of the king; but on Anselm's return to England the clergy and people of the see earnestly petitioned the archbishop that they might have Gifford for bishop, and he was at last prevailed upon to take the office. But he still would not consent to receive the ring and staff from Henry. However, for what reason it does not appear, the king connived at his receiving investiture in the cathedral from the hands of the archbishop. But his consecration was deferred. Subsequently to this, on the strength of the report brought from Rome by the bishops, Henry had invested two of his

[1] *Gest. Reg.*, § 417.

chaplains with the bishoprics of Salisbury and Hereford, and he now called on Anselm to consecrate the three bishops elect. Anselm remonstrated—he was ready to consecrate Gifford, but, as to the other two, it had been agreed between him and the king that till the Pope's decision had been finally ascertained he at least should not be expected to sanction lay investiture. Henry swore that he should consecrate all or none; he still refused, and the king ordered Gerard of York to consecrate. This was a gross infringement of the metropolitan rights of Canterbury, a point keenly felt at the time; but Gerard was ready. The tide, however, was turning. To Henry's surprise and indignation, the bishop elect of Hereford, a member of his court and the queen's chancellor, brought back the ring and crosier to the king, and resigned them, expressing his sorrow that, as things then stood, he had ever consented to take them: to go on, and receive consecration from Gerard, would be receiving a curse instead of a blessing. He of course was disgraced, and obliged to leave the court. But he was not alone. On the day of consecration, at the very last moment, when everything was prepared for the ceremony and the church was thronged with spectators, Gifford's conscience misgave him; he interrupted the service, and refused Gerard's benediction. Confounded and indignant, the officiating bishops retired, without finishing the ceremony for Roger, who had been appointed to Salisbury. 'At this a shout burst from the whole multitude, who had come together to see the issue; they cried out with one voice that William was for the right—that the bishops were no bishops, but perverters of justice.' With changed countenance and burning with rage at the insult, they rushed to the king to make their complaint. Gifford was summoned to Henry's presence; menaces on all sides were showered on him. 'There he stood', says Eadmer, 'but he would not flinch from the right; so he was despoiled of all he had, and driven

from the realm.' Anselm protested strongly and repeatedly, of course without effect; yet Henry had learnt what he had scarcely looked for. If the court clergy were becoming infected with Anselm's views of Church and State, and were beginning to turn on their patron, it might be time to think of some rougher and more summary way of finishing the dispute.

Henry, the most dissembling of men, was visibly showing his impatience; it was at all events necessary to get Anselm out of England—out of sight, and cut off from communication with the clergy. On some trifling pretext the king suddenly made his appearance at Canterbury; his real intention was by some means or other to drive the archbishop away. A letter had by this time come from the Pope: the king refused to see it. Anselm, on the other hand, dared not break the seal, for its contents might involve an immediate rupture; and further, to avoid the suspicion of forgery, he wished it to come sealed into the king's hands. But Henry had come to settle matters—he must have his own, he said, whether the Pope agreed or not: 'let every one who loved him know for certain that whoever refused him his paternal customs was his enemy.' Rumours were becoming rife among those most in his confidence of intentions of violence; the quarrel was waxing hot, and the future looked dismal and full of danger. 'The very nobles', says Eadmer, 'on whose advice Henry depended I have seen in tears at the thought of the mischief which was at hand.' Special prayers even were offered up for the crisis. But in the midst of this excitement Henry all at once changed his tone: he took up the language of entreaty—'would the archbishop go to Rome himself, and try his influence there?'. Anselm answered that, if his peers thought it right for him to go, he was ready, 'as God should give him strength', but that 'even if he should reach the threshold of the apostles, he could do nothing to

the prejudice of the liberty of the Church or his own honour—he could but bear witness to facts.' The reply was that nothing more was required: the king's commissioner would be there also, to plead for his master.

Four days after this had been settled, he was on horseback, leaving Canterbury to cross again the length of Europe, a feeble time-worn man on the verge of seventy but fearless and cheerful as ever. The intense heat of the season stopped his progress, and gave him a month of quiet in his old home at Bec; but he was on his way again before the summer was over. Henry had now gained his point in having got Anselm out of England; he had no wish that he should be seen and heard at Rome; it would be much more to his purpose if Anselm could be detained in Normandy or France. We find incidentally from one of Anselm's letters that the king had suddenly become anxious about 'his archbishop's' health and the fatigues of so long and rough a journey; he strongly recommended the archbishop to spare himself—to halt somewhere, and transact his business at Rome by envoys. Anselm's answer is dated from the passes of Mont Cenis; he is thankful for the king's care for him and assurances of his esteem, but he was too far on his way now to think of turning back—he must go on to his journey's end [1].

At Rome he found his old companion in these transactions, William Warelwast; and in due course the subject was brought before the Roman court. Warelwast urged the old ground of usage; moreover the English kings were distinguished for their munificence to the Holy See, and he knew for certain, he said, that if investitures were not allowed it would be so much the worse for the Romans, and they would be sorry for it when too late. He had his friends in the Curia; his words were received

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 76, from the valley of Maurienne.

with encouragement—many of the cardinals thought that the 'wishes of so great a man as the king of England were on no consideration to be overlooked.' Anselm was silent; Paschal also had not spoken, and Warelwast was emboldened. 'Let what will be said', he exclaimed with vehemence, 'know all present that, if it should cost him his realm, King Henry will not lose investitures.' 'Sayest thou that King Henry will not give up investitures?' was the quick rejoinder—'nor, before God, will Pope Paschal, to save his head, let him have them': 'the sound of which words exceedingly dismayed William.' He obtained however for Henry a personal exemption for a time from excommunication. Anselm was ordered to hold communion with him, but not with any of the other offenders, who were to remain under excommunication till the archbishop saw grounds to take off the sentence.

Warelwast worked hard, after Anselm had left Rome, to gain some further concessions; but all he could get was a kind of coaxing letter from the Pope to Henry, to smooth down the sternness of refusal with compliment and congratulation, about his successes and his 'distinguished and glorious consort' and the son she had just brought him, 'whom we have been told you have named William, after your illustrious father', appealing to his devotional feelings, assuring him that he was parting with nothing really valuable, and promising him on his compliance to indulge him with any favour he might ask, besides the apostolic absolution for himself and his queen and the protection of the Roman Church for his son. The Pope scarcely knew King Henry.

Warelwast overtook the archbishop's company, who were escorted through the Apennines by the great Countess Matilda; and travelled with him as far as Lyons. There he delivered to him a message from Henry—the last expedient, if the Roman negociations failed. 'The king earnestly desired his

return to England, if he was willing to do all that his predecessors had done to former kings.' 'Is that all?' said Anselm. 'I speak to a man of understanding' was the reply. It was intelligible enough; and accordingly Anselm took up his abode a second time with the Archbishop of Lyons, and Warelwast returned to England.

Thus was Anselm a second time cast out to eat the bread of strangers—thrown aside, and forced to sit by, checked, humbled, and sick at heart, while the great powers in Church and State exchanged their messages of civility, and carried on the game for which he was suffering, by the most approved rules of political manœuvre. Anselm felt most strongly the necessity of releasing the Church from the feudal yoke; but his line from the first had been not his own view of the matter, but simply obedience to the law of the Church, as soon as it came before him, and to the Pope. Only let the Pope speak out, and he was ready (as he showed afterwards) to abide by his decision. 'You tell me', says he in one of his letters to England, with unwonted sharpness, 'that they say that I forbid the King to grant investitures. Tell them that they lie. It is not I who forbid the king; but, having heard the Vicar of the Apostles in a great council excommunicate all who give or receive investiture, I have no mind to hold communion with excommunicates or to become excommunicate myself.'[1] But Paschal's policy was a cruel and embarrassing one. With his hands full at home, he was afraid of the king of England, the son of him who had kept Gregory VII at bay; his words were strong, but he shrank from acting. He had confirmed and republished, most emphatically and without exception, the canons against investiture, and solemnly declared his intention to enforce them. Henry from the first had held but one language—he wanted no compromise:

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 100.

'nothing in the world should make him give up his usages'. And yet Paschal had allowed, or rather encouraged, embassy after embassy in endless succession to come with its hollow compliments and unvarying message, and to return, as it was intended, with a letter of expostulation or at most a distant menace. Nothing could better suit with Henry's wishes and policy; and thus Anselm, whom the Roman court was well content to see the champion of ecclesiastical liberty, was in reality left to fight his battle, as he best could, alone—with words indeed of respect and praise, but with little hearty aid, and with instructions which, he complained, only embarrassed him.

And in England friends and foes alike tried his patience, teazing, mistaking, and criticizing him. The king, greatly relieved by his absence, sent fresh embassies to Rome, and seized the archbishop's revenue for his own use, as if he had been a convicted traitor: 'yet', says Eadmer, 'with consideration and tenderness'. At the same time in his letters he was as bland and smooth as ever; so full of respect and attachment to Anselm, so grieved that he could not be with him as Lanfranc had been for many years with his father. Meanwhile he had no objection that Anselm should be allowed what was 'convenient' out of the revenues of Canterbury [1]. But Anselm's questions to him as to his intentions for the future were asked in vain. Then, on the other hand, Queen Matilda—'good queen Molde'—amiable, warm-hearted, religious lady, could not live without her venerable confessor. She could not understand why he should stand out so obstinately against her lord and master's kind wishes. She argued with the archbishop 'to soften what with all respect she must call his iron heart'. She incessantly importuned him, with a lady's impatience of reasons and means, to find 'some way

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 94.

by which neither he might do wrong, nor the rights of majesty be infringed '.[1] His poor monks too at Canterbury were sore beset by the king's exactions; they were perplexed in conscience, jealousies and complaints were becoming rife, everything was getting into disorder; they wanted their head among them, and their very loyalty and affection made them fretful and peevish that in spite of the king he did not return. Letter after letter he had to write to Prior Ernulf, and to 'his dearest brethren and children', quieting their fears, exhorting them to manly endurance, soothing their pettishness, cheering them with hopes of the future—remembering especially, in his characteristic way, the young boys and children, and sending messages to them 'not to forget what they had heard from him'. Himself the greatest sufferer, all looked to him to receive their complaints, to keep up their spirits, to throw himself into their difficulties and point out a clear way out of them. Distrust, irritation, perplexity, all found their way to his ears. The sufferings and scandals of the day were all laid at his door—thrown in his teeth by ill-nature, gossip, or impatient zeal. 'Was he so holy that he could not do as Lanfranc had done?' 'Was he such a coward as to fly from his post at the word of one William?' 'How could he bear the thoughts of the judgment-seat, and the souls which he might have rescued by his presence in England?'[2]. Such were the questions addressed to him by his own party. Critics of another sort charged him with 'letting wicked clerks invade and lay waste the Church without rising up against them', while—what was only less mischievous and culpable than his negligence—he was depriving the king of his rights[3]. The trouble which he endured shows itself in his correspondence in the quiet nervous plainness of language which marks struggling but repressed vexation. His great

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 96. [2] Eadm., p. 69. *Ep.*, iii, 90; iv, 44.
[3] *Ep.*, iii, 100.

comfort during these years of exile was the steady attachment of Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester. He was not a man to take a lead or throw much weight into either scale in a contest like the present; but in him the archbishop had a friend who had long loved and revered him—in whom he could place most implicit confidence; a man of plain good sense, whose unpretending yet active service in matters of routine business he could always count on.

At length, after waiting a year and a half at Lyons, Anselm resolved to act on his own responsibility. The king of course showed no intention of yielding or of giving up the archiepiscopal revenues which he had seized. The utmost the Pope would do, after all the delay, was to excommunicate by name the king's advisers, the chief of whom was the crafty Earl of Mellent. The king's sentence was delayed, so he wrote Anselm, 'because another embassy (the second since Anselm had left Rome) was expected'. 'On receiving this letter', says Eadmer, 'Anselm saw that it was useless waiting at Lyons for help from Rome, especially as he had repeatedly sent agents and letters to the Pope about the settlement of this business, and up to this time nothing was vouchsafed to him save from time to time a promise of something held out by way of consolation.' For the third time he had called upon Henry to restore the lands of Canterbury. 'The cause is not mine, but God's, entrusted to me, and I fear to delay long to cry to God. Force me not, I pray you, to cry sorrowfully and reluctantly "Arise, O God, and judge thou thy cause".[1] Henry had returned no answer save his usual smooth evasions (*blandientem sibi dilationem*); and Anselm then resolved to approach the borders of Normandy and fulfil his threat.

This alarmed Henry; an excommunication from Anselm at this time would have been a serious embarrassment to him. He had enemies enough on

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 95.

all sides looking out for an opportunity of attacking at advantage a power 'which was not loved over much' (*potestatem non adeo amatam*), which threatened or had injured them. And he was besides on the point of attempting the conquest of Normandy. His sister, the Countess of Blois, mediated, and a conference was arranged between him and the archbishop at a castle called L'Aigle. Henry was all respect and complaisance, expressed the greatest delight at meeting Anselm, and would always go himself to the archbishop's quarters instead of sending for him. The result was that the revenues of the see were given up, and Anselm restored to the king's favour.

But things were far from being settled. Henry was not a man to yield while a single chance remained to be tried. The old question was still open; there must be fresh communications with Rome, which were put off as long as possible. Meanwhile Anselm could not return to England. Henry made the most of the interval. He was just at this time in pressing need of money for his war in Normandy; and the Church of course did not escape, 'in the manifold contributions, which never ceased, before the king went over to Normandy, and while he was there, and after he came back again'.[1] Henry had some skill in inventing, on such emergencies, new '*foris facta*'—matters for fine and forfeiture—questions for the 'Curia Regis' to settle between him and his lieges. On this occasion he was seized with a zeal for Church discipline. Many of the parochial clergy were living in disobedience to the canons of a late synod at London, which had forbidden clerical marriage: 'this sin the king could not endure to see unpunished'. So, to bring the offenders to their duty, of his own mere motion he proceeded to mulct them heavily. The tax, however, proved not so productive as he

[1] *Saxon Chronicle*.

had anticipated; and therefore, changing his mind, he imposed the assessment on the whole body of the parochial clergy, innocent as well as guilty, throughout the kingdom. Anselm expostulated; the offending clergy ought to be punished, he said, not by the officers of the Exchequer but by their bishops. Henry, in his reply, is much surprised at the archbishop's objections; he thought he was only doing his work for him, labouring in his cause, but he would see to it; 'however, whatever else had happened, the archbishop's people had been left in peace'. But, as to the mass of the clergy, seizures, imprisonment, and every kind of annoyance had enforced the tax-gatherer's demands. Two hundred priests went barefooted in procession, in alb and stole, to Henry's palace, 'with one voice imploring him to have mercy upon them'; but they were driven from his presence: 'the king perhaps was busy'. They then, clothed with 'confusion upon confusion', besought the intercession and good offices of the queen; she was moved to tears at their story, but she was afraid to interfere in their behalf. And, what is a still greater proof of Henry's tyranny, the court-party of the clergy, and among them the excommunicated bishops, were at last beginning to turn their eyes towards Anselm. A letter was sent to him about this time signed by several of the bishops, entreating him to return as the only means of remedying the misery of the English Church. 'We have waited for peace, but it has departed far from us. Laymen have broken in even to the altar. . . Thy children', they continue, 'will fight with thee the battle of the Lord; and, if thou art gathered to thy fathers before us, we will receive of thy hand the heritage of thy labours. Delay then no longer; thou hast now no excuse before God; we are ready not only to follow but to go before thee, if thou command us . . . for *now* we are seeking in this cause not what is ours, but what is the Lord's.' Among the names attached

to this letter are those of Gerard of York, Herbert of Norwich, and Robert of Chester.

At length the envoys returned from Rome with Paschal's final instructions to Anselm. He was firm in prohibiting investiture, but yielded the point of homage. 'We must stoop', he wrote to Anslem, 'to raise the fallen; but, though in doing so we are bent and appear to be falling, we do not really lose our uprightness.'[1] Anselm felt as strongly about homage as about investiture; but it was his duty to obey, and he prepared to do so. He was long detained in Normandy by a desperate illness; for his health, never strong, was now completely broken by anxiety and hardship. Henry began to fear that he should after all lose the credit of his reconciliation and reluctant concessions, and should have to bear the odium of having driven a man whose character and prolonged sufferings had been year after year rousing more and more the sympathy of England and France to die in exile. But Anselm recovered, and in the autumn of 1106 returned to England. A further delay of a year took place before matters were adjusted. Henry was during part of this time in Normandy, where the decisive battle of Tinchebrai placed his brother Robert and his dominions in his power; and, later, the presence of Paschal at the council of Troyes gave the king a new pretext for postponement. At length, on the first three days of August 1107, a great council was held in London where the subjects in question were debated between Henry and the bishops, the archbishop not being present. A party among the bishops still held out for the old usages, but they were overruled. Henry, in the presence of Anselm, and in a larger assembly to which the commons were admitted, solemnly 'allowed and ordained that no one should hereafter for ever receive investiture of bishopric or abbey by ring and crosier from the king

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 90.

or any lay hand'; and Anselm agreed not to refuse consecration to bishops or abbots who had done homage to the king for their benefices.

So ended Anselm's long battle, just soon enough to give him a short breathing time before he was called away. And now what good came of the result? Was it a victory? Was it worth the gaining?

Dr Lingard thinks cheaply of it: 'on the whole (he says) the Church gained little by the compromise. It might check, but it did not abolish, the principal abuse. If Henry surrendered an unnecessary ceremony, he still retained the substance. The right he assumed of nominating bishops and abbots remained unimpaired.'

This is an easy view of the subject, and perhaps a convenient one when writing in the nineteenth century on behalf of churchmen of the twelfth. It may produce a better impression of them to underrate their claims and what they achieved, to represent Anselm as 'in the true spirit of conciliation giving up part of his pretensions', and treat the king's reluctant submission as the mere 'surrender of an unnecessary ceremony'. But the position is scarcely tenable. The Church of those days did aim at, did gain, did use, more power than Dr Lingard would imply. Investiture was held too pertinaciously to have been a mere 'unnecessary ceremony', to have been given up without defeat. What Anselm did—what all parties then felt to be a triumph—was *to break the prescription of feudalism*, a prescription which delivered up the Church, bound hand and foot, to the will of rulers who could no longer be trusted, against whose corruption and usurpation there was no ordinary remedy. The dangerous tendencies of the day were not completely indeed but in a real and marked manner checked. It was settled that the Church was not irrevocably bound up with the doctrines of the feudal law. When Henry gave up investiture, he broke in, as he truly felt, on a great system; he surrendered what not merely *reminded*

the Church of his power over her, but what actually, as things were then, *gave him a title* to command unqualified obedience from the clergy, and made resistance to his will treason. Homage indeed remained—a very solemn form of surrender of 'life and limb, and earthly worship'; but it remained broken off from the other ceremony with which it had been so long connected, without meaning, or forced into a new one—an anomaly, a mere form of common fealty, a memorial of power lost—an engagement, which in its old stringent shape the common lawyers of succeeding reigns came to see was 'inconvenient' in a 'man of religion for that he hath professed himself to be only the man of God'.[1] This, almost more than the question of nomination, was the vital point to establish. Even if elections had remained as they had been, it would have been a victory to carry it. But in truth the king's *exclusive* right of nomination was, naturally and of course, very much affected also. For where the State recognizes the Church, the election of her rulers, even if popular in theory, cannot but be the result of mixed influences; no practical man in the eleventh or twelfth century dreamed of excluding altogether the king's voice—the question was one of checks and counterbalances, however at times it might be strongly and nakedly stated. Whatever therefore weakened the king's hold on the bishops as mere feudal vassals, weakened also his claim to exclusive nomination, and let in, in varying measure, the influence of the Church. The claim indeed, even in William the Conqueror's time, seems never to have been more than a customary act of power, without any such pretext of legal consistency as the claim of investiture; it was a claim much like that of a great landholder or borough-proprietor to return his member. But early in Henry's reign we hear of

[1] *Litt.*, ii, s. 86, *v.* Coke, who quotes the lawyers from Glanville (H. II) downwards.

the form of election by the clergy and people[1]; that is, the acknowledged form, dormant apparently under the despotism of the preceding kings, revived of itself when Henry in his early and unsettled days promised liberty to the Church. His concession of investitures would practically have the same effect, and in a still greater degree. And it is probably to this practical effect, not settled by formal stipulation, because the right was not denied in theory, that Eadmer refers when he says of Henry[2] that, when he gave up investiture, he also left the customs of his predecessors, and no longer elected prelates at his own will (*per se elegit*), an account which is confirmed by a letter of Anselm to the Pope; while the influence which he still retained may account for William of Malmsbury's statement that he 'retained the privilege of election'. The election of Archbishop Ralph, Anselm's successor, supplies the best illustration of the change brought about in this respect. The king's influence, though visible and weighty throughout, is no longer the mere nomination of the Conqueror or William Rufus: the voice of the Church, *both* through the bishops and through the more immediate representatives of the common people—the monks—makes itself distinctly heard, and really affects the election[3].

But, after all, in the great battles of the world it is not mere 'carrying points' which constitutes victory and makes the combatant's toil and sufferings worth undergoing. Terms of accommodation

[1] Gerard of York (Anselm., *Ep.*, iv, 2; comp. Anselm's letter, Eadm., p. 80), Roger of Salisbury (Rudborne, in Wharton, i, 274), William Gifford (Eadm., p. 64).

[2] *De Vit. S. Anselm.*, p. 25; Anselm., *Ep. ad Pasch.* (iii, 181) in Eadm., *H. N.*, p. 78. 'In personis eligendis nullatenus propria utitur voluntate, sed religiosorum se penitus committit consilio.'—So Peter of Blois, in his *Continuation of Ingulph*, p. 126: 'Electiones prælatorum omnibus collegiis libere concessit.'

[3] Eadmer, *H. N.*, p. 86, 87, Will. Malm., *De Gest. Pontif.*, i, p. 230: 'In commune arbitrium refudit electionem'. See also the election of William of Corboil, *Sax. Chron.*, a. 1123.

and compromise are very far from showing always which is the winning, the rising, side. To have enabled a cause to show its strength or its greatness, to have palpably called out in its behalf wisdom, courage, faithfulness—heroic energy, heroic endurance, to have looked in the face for its sake what men commonly shrink from, to have resisted unto blood—this, even under outward disadvantage and failure, is really victory; this is well worth the having, and in time will bear its fruits. In this contest, with more than a fair field, with all appliances of force and subtlety short of open violence, with the vantage of prescription, with all the honour and power of England, bishops and barons, the strong hand and ready tongue, to second them, two kings tried their strength against the Church; for more than ten years they did their best to beat down a cause upheld mainly by the conscience and fortitude of one old man. They were no triflers: they had laid down their stake and contested it stoutly; and in the face of all England they lost it. Was this little to gain? Was it little for the weak and defenceless to have not only resisted but to have overcome the soldier's sword and statesman's craft? —little for the Church to have made itself felt against such odds? Were Norman barons and a Norman king *fainéants* and mere devotees, that it was a small matter for a monk to have made them acknowledge that there was a power about them, spiritual only and intangible, which it was not enough for them to honour with words and forms in churches and ceremonies, but to whose control too they must bend in matters of serious business? Is it such an every-day occurrence for a religious party to bring a resolute and able statesman against his will to a compromise? Was it possible that Anselm, who had twice sailed from England in disgrace, leaving behind him the sympathies of few besides monks and Saxon churls, should after ten years of banishment return—the same old monk, with his monkish

retinue, though greeted and ministered to by the Queen of England; and should have his cause allowed in full parliament, by his most violent opponents, by King Henry himself—without impressing on his age, in a way not to be at once forgotten, that the spiritual claims of the Church were a reality of some consequence, that an archbishop of Canterbury might be something more than a venerable old man in rich vestments whose chief business was to place the crown on the king's head at the high tides of the year.

He broke a spell. He showed that, though the days of martyrdom were gone by—so he thought[1], rather prematurely perhaps—, men of consequence and name, guests in kings' palaces, accustomed to be treated with tenderness and spoken to softly and honourably, might still in sober earnest have to rough it for a bare principle. A needful lesson often, when society has got into fixed ways and takes high truths for granted; when those truths have become mixed up with matters of every-day business—things to be seen and felt, ceremonial and etiquette, made ready by the hands of men, about which they laugh, or gossip, or yawn, or still worse cheat and lie. This atmosphere of custom and commonplace has a sad effect in tarnishing the glorious and heroic, in confounding the great and the little, in making it unpractical and visionary to do anything 'but go on as we have been going'. So things remain till they sink into ruin, or till amid dulness and wrong-headedness and quackery some man of free and genuine mind discerns what is really noble and worth exalting, and is willing at the risk of at least being called a bigot or an enthusiast to sacrifice himself to it. Anselm had got hold of such a principle. He saw in it the cause of purity and sincerity, the cause also of the despised and friendless, against the great and lordly. Providence, instincts, the voice of the Church, seemed to entrust it to him, and nothing

[1] *Ep.*, iii, 90: 'At nihil horum super me cadet'.

could scare or lure him away from it. There might be much to say against his course—the usages were but forms and trifles, or they were an important right of the crown, and to assail them was usurpation and disloyalty, or it was a mere dream to hope to abolish them, or they were not worth the disturbance they caused, or there were worse things to be remedied; difficulties there were no doubt: still, for all that, he felt that this was the fight of the day, and he held on unmoved. Through what was romantic and what was unromantic in his fortunes, whether the contest showed in its high or low form—as a struggle 'in heavenly places' against evil, before saints and angels, with the unfading crown in view, or as a game against cowardly selfishness and the intrigue of courts—cheered by the sympathies of Christendom, by the love and reverence of crowds which sought his blessing, or brought down from his height of feeling by commonplace disagreeables, the inconveniences of life—dust, heat, and wet, bad roads, and imperialist robbers, debts and fevers, low insults and troublesome friends—through it all, his faith failed him not: it was ever the same precious and ennobling cause, bringing consolation in trouble, giving dignity to what was vexatious and humiliating.

It was her own fault if the Church gained little by the compromise and by so rare a lesson. In one sense, indeed, what is gained by any great religious movement? What are all reforms, remedies, restorations, victories of truth, but protests of a minority—efforts, clogged and incomplete, of the good and brave, just enough in their own day to stop instant ruin, the appointed means to save what is to be saved, but in themselves failures? Good men work and suffer, and bad men enjoy their labours and spoil them; a step is made in advance—evil rolled back and kept in check for a while, only to return perhaps the stronger. But thus, and thus only, is truth passed on and the world preserved from utter corruption. Doubtless bad men still continued

powerful in the English Church—Henry tyrannized, evil was done, and the bishops kept silence; low aims and corruption may have still polluted the very seats of justice; gold may have been as powerful with cardinals as with King Henry and his chancellors; Anselm may have overrated his success. Yet success and victory it was—a vantage ground for all true men who would follow him. If his work was undone by others, he at least had done his task manfully. And he had left his Church another saintly name and the memory of his good confession, enshrining as it were her cause, to await the day when some other champion should again take up the quarrel, thus from age to age to be maintained, till He shall come for whom alone it is reserved 'to still' for ever 'the enemy and avenger' and to 'root out all wicked doers from the City of the Lord'.

The struggle ended, Anselm applied himself during the short time that was left him to carry out those great objects which had given importance to the contest—the reformation of the clergy and the protection of the poor; and, to do Henry justice, it must be said that in the latter point, while the archbishop lived, he seconded him vigorously. But Anselm's task was now ended. Soon after his return he buried his friend Gundulf; and in little more than a year he followed him. We shall give the account of his last days in the words of one who had shared his sufferings and who watched by his death-bed, the monk Eadmer,

During these events (the final settlement of his dispute with the king) he wrote a treatise *Concerning the Agreement of Foreknowledge, Predestination, and the Grace of God, with Free-will.* In which, contrary to his wont, he found difficulty in writing; for, after his illness at Bury St Edmunds as long as he was spared to this life, he was weaker in body than before; so that, when moving from place to place, he was from that time carried in a litter instead of riding on horseback. He was tried also by frequent and sharp sicknesses, so that we scarce dared to promise him life. He however never

left off his old way of living, but was always engaged in godly meditations or holy exhortations or other good works.

In the third year after King Henry had recalled him from his second banishment, every kind of food by which nature is sustained became loathsome to him. He used to eat, however, putting force upon himself, knowing that he could not live without food; and in this way he somehow or another dragged on life through half a year, gradually sinking day by day in body, though in vigour of mind he was still the same as he used to be. So, being strong in spirit though but very feeble in the flesh, he could not go to his oratory on foot; but from his strong desire to attend the consecration of our Lord's Body, which he venerated with a special feeling of devotion, he caused himself to be carried thither every day in a chair. We who attended on him tried to prevail on him to desist because it fatigued him so much; but we succeeded, and that with difficulty, only four days before he died.

From that time he took to his bed; and with gasping breath continued to exhort all who had the privilege of drawing near him to live to God, each in his own order. Palm Sunday had dawned, and we, as usual, were sitting round him; one of us said to him 'Lord Father, we are given to understand that you are going to leave the world for your Lord's Easter Court.' He answered 'If His will be so, I shall gladly obey His will. But if He will rather that I should yet remain among you, at least till I have solved a question which I am turning in my mind about the origin of the soul, I should receive it thankfully, for I know not whether any one will finish it when I am gone. I trust that, if I could take food, I might yet get well. For I feel no pain anywhere—only a general sinking, from weakness of my stomach, which cannot take food.'

On the following Tuesday, towards evening, he was no longer able to speak intelligibly. Ralph, Bishop of Rochester, asked him to bestow his absolution and blessing on us who were present and on his other children, and also on the King and Queen with their children, and the people of the land who had kept themselves under God in his obedience. He raised his right hand, as if he was suffering nothing, and made the sign of the Holy Cross; and then drooped his head and sank down.

The congregation of the brethren were already chanting matins in the great Church when one of those who watched about our Father took the book of the Gospels, and read before him the history of the Passion, which was to be read that day at the mass. But when he came to our Lord's words: 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed

unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table', he began to draw his breath more slowly. We saw that he was just going; so he was removed from his bed, and laid upon sackcloth and ashes. And thus, with the whole family of his children collected round him, he gave up his last breath into the hands of his Creator, and slept in peace.

He passed away, as morning was breaking, on the Wednesday before the day of our Lord's Supper, the 21st of April in the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1109; the sixteenth of his pontificate and seventy-sixth of his life.

Such was his end: there is nothing remarkable about it; nothing apparently to distinguish it from the last hours of many whom we may have known familiarly ourselves; nothing to fix upon but a kind of homely quiet, an unconscious readiness, without emotion or effort of any kind, to meet the future. Death is at the door—yet he seems to be but continuing his wonted tenour of life, as when he was a monk at Bec—there is no break; he seems not to feel anything unusual to be coming on—he talks of death as of some mere ordinary hindrance to his work. The combatant, the confessor, the veteran of ten tempestuous years, is there just finishing his course; but all traces of the storm and battle have disappeared; there is no scar to be seen, no heaving of the waters, no look thrown back to the past or forward to the future. For God he has suffered and toiled—to Him he leaves the Church; his own share in the work done, he has fallen back, as of course, into his old ways of living and thinking. He says little; but one thing is evidently filling his thoughts, the contemplation of the mysteries of the faith; and at the end he seems to vanish, he 'passes away' amid chanting of psalms and gospel-lessons, sacraments and blessings, sackcloth and ashes—the accompaniments of his everyday life. Strange contrast to the thrilling and awful scene which closed with such grandeur the career of the next confessor of the Church.

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